



# Code of Behaviour

(prepared in accordance with the NEWB protocols)

## **Mission Statement**

*Dunamase College is a coeducational multidenominational second level school. Its ethos is based on creating a community where all members feel valued and are free to achieve their full academic and creative potential. It fosters independence in students to encourage them to respect themselves, each other and the environment in which they live.*

## **Aims**

This policy aims to support the school in

- a) Fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect in all aspects of school life.
- b) Specify how transgressions of the code will be dealt with.
- c) Clearly state procedures which will be used should a student's behaviour impact negatively on the school community.
- d) This policy will work in tandem with the Anti-Bullying policy to create a safe caring environment for all members of the school community and will strive to fulfil the initial visions for the school founding committee.
- e) With strong guidance from an explicit strong code of behaviour our students will have the opportunity to optimise their educational experiences and to develop into active respectful citizens.

## **Background**

This code of behaviour is based on the recommendations of section 23 of the Education Act (2000). It reflects the ethos of the school and the various criteria laid down by the Department of Education.

The policy will be updated appropriately, e.g. on recommendations by the DES inspectorate, physical changes within the school etc.

It is the duty of the Board of Management to promote and protect the ethos of the school, with particular regard to section 15 (2)(b) of the Education Act 1998.

In brief, this is to create an environment that will foster the growth and development of good citizens, with a strong sense of place and culture.

Responsibilities lie with all stakeholders in the school community: parents/ guardians, teachers, students, the Minister for Education and those involved in school administration to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and to create a caring environment for the benefit of all.

The policy reflects fully the legislative requirements regarding the creation of a positive environment, where all members of the community feel valued and can carry out their work in a dignified manner, with due regards for their rights as individuals. It is the duty of all stakeholders to respect and protect the rights of all members of the school community.

The vast majority of stakeholders comply fully with the ethics of the school community to optimise the establishment and maintenance of a benevolent school community. Should a stakeholder have difficulty with their responsibilities, and behave in a way that may be detrimental to the community as a whole action will be taken. They will initially be advised regarding their commitments to the school and asked to reflect on the commitments initially given on joining. Should the code of behaviour continue to be breached, the individuals involved will be held responsible for their actions. In these rare cases the Board of Management may have to pass judgement on the relative rights of a student to receive an education in the school and the relative rights of the other members of the school community to work in an environment that reflects the dignity and respect of the entire school community.

The role and commitments required from the main stakeholders: the student, the parent / guardian and the teaching staff are stated explicitly on the website and below:

### **Students' Commitment**

As a Student I commit to:

- Following the school rules for learning
- Always using the ICT equipment in the appropriate way
- Treat everyone in the school with respect
- Treat the school and its facilities with respect
- Come to school every day and on time
- Wear my full uniform
- Organise my books, ICT equipment and locker every morning/evening
- Bring the correct books and equipment to class
- Follow the classroom guidelines
- Listen carefully in class
- Participate in class/get involved in learning activities
- Do my best in class
- Help other students to learn
- Tell the teacher if I don't understand/ask questions if I don't understand
- Always write my homework, dates of tests, and project deadlines into my journal
- Always do my written and learning homework to the best of my ability
- Keep any notes I get from the teacher carefully in a folder
- Be a friend to others when they need it
- Take responsibility for my actions
- Get involved in extra-curricular activities
- Be proud of doing well in school
- Represent my college with pride

## Parents' commitment

As a parent/guardian I commit to:

- Send my child to school every day and on time
- Send my child to school fully prepared to learn - in uniform and with all the books and equipment they need
- Check homework and the journal every day
- Write a note to the teacher if my child has tried his/her best and really can't do their homework
- Help my child develop good organisational skills - to manage timetables and lockers
- Provide a good learning space for my child at home
- Help my child study/testing my child before an exam
- Help my child develop their own learning style
- Encourage my child to work hard and do their best in school
- Communicate with the teachers regularly
- Let the school know if my child is absent from school
- Ensure that my child brings a healthy lunch to school everyday
- Inform my child's teachers if there are issues affecting my child's learning
- Encourage my child to become involved in extra-curricular activities
- Make time to talk to my child about their day in school
- Encourage, reward and reinforce positive feedback from the school
- Work with and support teachers

## Teachers' Commitment

As a teacher I commit to:

- Create a positive, friendly, caring, safe and happy classroom
- Be prepared and on time for every class
- Treat all students fairly and with respect
- Be friendly and calm when working with students
- Listen to and value every student's opinions and point of view
- Answer students' questions, and help students if they don't understand
- Encourage every student's effort, and encourage every student to participate
- Support every student's learning needs
- Use various methodologies and learning stimuli in my class
- Challenge every student to reach the highest academic achievement
- Help students learn study skills in my subject areas
- Help students develop study plans before formal exams
- Identify the learning objective at the beginning of every lesson
- Write homework on the board well before the end of the lesson
- Check that homework is done in every lesson, and give feedback on corrected work promptly
- Encourage students to get involved in extra curricular activities
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians
- Get involved in school development activities
- Develop and share resources with colleagues
- Support other staff members
- Continue my own professional development

## **General Rules**

### **Respect**

Our school is inclusive and fosters respect for self and respect for all members of the community. Disrespect for others, on any basis will not be tolerated and will result in implications.

Everyone has a right to work, study and relax in an atmosphere free from bullying, abuse or disrespect of any type.

### **Respect for property**

All members of the school community should have respect for the property of the school and that of all members of the school community

### **Student Journal**

Both class teacher and parent sign the journal every week. The student should have their journal with them at all times and to present it when requested to do so to any member of the school staff. It will be used to record assessment results, and to provide feedback on the progress and behaviour of the student. It should be kept up to date and free of extraneous artwork. It should be updated and brought home daily.

Parents should use the journal for providing information on lateness and absences from school and any other relevant information they wish to provide to the school.

Above all, the journal is for the recording of homework, written and non-written.

The responsibility for the correct upkeep of the journal lies with the student.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

No student should be in any physical contact with any other member of the school community, fellow student or staff.

### **LUNCH**

We seek to keep the school environment clean and put in place 'good practice' with regard to the disposal of litter. Lunches are taken in designated areas only. No eating or drinking is allowed in any other part of the school building.

### **MOBILE PHONES**

The use of mobile phones causes significant disruption. Calls being made to students when they are in class and texting in class are some of the difficulties.

Camera and 3/4G phones potentially present very serious harassment and bullying issues. No student should have a mobile phone in their possession during the school day (8.15-3.30). If a student breaks this rule the phone will be confiscated immediately and retained in the office until the following Friday. In case of any further infringements the phone will be confiscated until the following Friday and a parent / guardian will have to come to collect it.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Students are required to be present at 8.20 a.m. each morning to get their books ready and take their places for roll call. A note of explanation or a phone call from parents is required for students arriving more than half an hour late. Repeated lack of punctuality will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a vital element of school life. It enables students to check what they have been taught in class, to determine gaps in their understanding and to perfect their knowledge. Homework received each day should be recorded in the space provided in the journal. Homework may consist of:

A review of all work covered in class

Set written and oral work

Revision

Students should take great care in completing homework to a high standard, ensuring it is neatly presented and handed in on time.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Continuous assessment will take place in each class in the form of regular homework, both written and learning, class tests, oral questioning, project work, quizzes etc. There will be a record of continuous assessment in the student journal and online. Students receive formal school exams at Christmas and prior to the Summer holidays. All test papers should reflect the style, language and layout of the Junior Cert/Leaving Cert exam papers as appropriate. Mock exams for State Examinations will take place in February.

## **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

Students are encouraged to have a positive attitude towards the environment. To this end great care should be taken of furniture and fittings and all school equipment. A student caught damaging school property will have to repair or repay the damage done. If the damage is exceptionally serious and malicious he or she will face suspension. In addition the whole school community should feel a responsibility for keeping the school litter free.

## **BICYCLES**

Bicycles left in the school grounds must always be locked. Students are encouraged to wear helmets and high visibility clothing when cycling. Cycling is not allowed within the school grounds

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

Students should present themselves for class neat and tidy and wearing full school uniform. Hats, scarves and hoodies should not be worn in class or around the school. Body piercing, jewellery other than one stud in each ear and a watch are not allowed for safety reasons. No make-up allowed

Items of school uniform, sports gear etc. should be clearly labelled with the owner's name.

Appropriate rain gear should be worn when necessary so that the students do not arrive in school with wet clothes. An extra pair of shoes and socks should be brought to school for lunchtime sports..

Students will have to take in sports gear for their PE class , and change clothes before and after PE. The school uniform can be purchased at Shaw's Portlaoise. Black leather shoes, not black runners, with navy socks or tights are required (not leggings). Parents will be called to bring in a uniform or to collect their child where a student has no uniform.

### **EQUIPMENT FOR CLASS**

All students are responsible for having the right books and equipment for class and for exams – pens, pencils, mathematical instrument sets, calculators and maths tables etc.

### **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, No. 18 States:

‘Where a student is absent from the school at which he is registered during part of a school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such a student shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the code of behaviour prepared by the school under section 23, notify the principal of the school of the reasons for the student's absence’.

A note from parents/guardians written in the journal should be given to the class teacher at roll call on the date a student returns to school after a period of absence. The school has a responsibility to inform TUSLA should a student have a pattern of absence from school.

Notes to get off early, recorded and signed in the journal, shall be presented to the class teacher. No student is allowed to leave school during school hours without permission. Students may not absent themselves from class unless permission has been given.

Should a child have to leave for an appointment during school time, they **MUST** be signed in and out by a PARENT/ GUARDIAN. Please contact the school if this is an issue.

### **REPORT SYSTEM**

When a student's behaviour in class is not satisfactory she/he may be put on a Behaviour Report. Over a week period, their behaviour and performance in class is monitored by the Class Tutor and by parents/guardians. If there are further disciplinary problems after two reports a student may be suspended or put on internal suspension. Parents/guardians are always notified when a student is put on Report and generally are invited to come to the school to meet the Class Tutor/Principal.

### **SANCTIONS**

Sanctions for disruption and bad behaviour may include extra work, penalty sheets, notes in journal, lunchtime or after school detentions, letters home, meeting with parents/guardians, suspension and expulsion from school.

### **POINTS SYSTEM**

As part of the school Code of Behaviour we are currently operating a points system for students. The students can earn positive or negative points depending on their conduct and work around the school. Positive and negative behaviours are rewarded or discouraged respectively. Parents can access their child's behaviour record on their personal VSWare page. Details of points awarded are included in the appendix.

## **DETENTION**

Certain breaches of discipline are punishable by detention. Detention of students is an approved sanction in this school. Parents/Guardians will have due notice of any detentions taking place outside of school hours. Students who do not attend after-school detention on the specified day will be given an additional detention. Detention at lunchtime may be given without parental notice.

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is a serious sanction and will be imposed by the Principal in cases where other efforts to resolve a disciplinary situation have failed or where the nature of the incident dictates that a student be removed from the school. Before suspending a student the Principal/Deputy Principal will inform the parents/guardians in writing of the reason for the suspension, the length of the suspension and the requirements that must be met to gain re-instatement.

All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management and where students are suspended for six days or more the Welfare Board will be informed.

## **EXPULSIONS**

Expulsion is the most severe sanction by a school. It will only be imposed for very serious breaches of school discipline or in cases where the rights of a greater number of students are being denied because of the continual disruptive behaviour of a student.

Should the Board of Management decide to expel a student the Board shall inform the parents/guardians in writing and will inform the Welfare Board. The parents/guardians shall be informed of their right to appeal and meet the Board. Should the Board of Management stand by its decision to expel the student, their parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal to the Welfare Board. At all times due regard will be given to section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

## **BULLYING**

We work hard in Dunamase College to create an atmosphere where there is mutual respect between students, staff and parents. As a result of this we have a school bullying policy and the school will not tolerate any bullying behaviour.

## **SAFETY**

Everyone must be very conscious of safety precautions and procedures. With a little foresight accidents can be avoided. All members of the school community share a responsibility for the health and safety of all in the school.

## **SMOKING**

The Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 prohibits smoking within the school boundary. Dunamase College fully accepts its responsibilities in respect of this legislation. A copy of the school's Smoke-Free workplace policy is available on request from the office. Any student found smoking within the school boundaries will be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including expulsion. E Cigarettes are also prohibited.

## **DRUGS**

The school has a strict anti-drugs policy. Students caught in possession or under the influence of controlled substances (alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, etc.) face suspension or expulsion and the Gardai will be informed.

Prescription or over-the-counter drugs (painkillers etc.) are not permitted in school. Should they be required by the student prior permission should be obtained from the principal and safe storage will be organised in the office. Teacher's are generally not allowed or expected to administer medicines. In the case of emergency procedures that may be required (Epipen administration etc parents should contact the office to discuss this)

## **SCHOOL TRIPS**

School tours are organized by staff members in their free time. Normal school rules apply at all times. The school reserves the right within its discretion to refuse a student permission to travel on a tour.

## **USE OF ICT EQUIPMENT AND INTERNET**

Students must at all times follow the school's ICT policy and the teachers' directives with regard to the use of ICT equipment and access to the Internet. Students who fail to comply with these procedures may have access to ICT equipment and the Internet removed and face sanctions up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Information regarding the school's Code of Behaviour will be disseminated in the following ways

1. A Copy of the policy may be obtained in the office.
2. Signing the Code of Behaviour is a condition of being granted a place in the school.
3. Abstracts of the most up to date copy at time of going to press is in the student journal. This must be signed by both student and parent / guardian at the beginning of each school year.
4. General rules for students will be reiterated at the induction night at the beginning of first year.
5. Should any alteration occur during the year the students will be informed by the principal / class teacher.
6. During detention, work to promote positive behaviour will be provided to the students.
7. The latest policy will be available on the school website. [www.dunamasecollege.ie](http://www.dunamasecollege.ie)

The policy is regularly reviewed at meetings of school management and staf

## Appendix

## Point System

<b>Positive Behaviours</b>				<b>Negative Behaviours</b>	
Home Work (effort)	+1			*Mobile Phone	-3
Sports	+1			*Tablet mis use	-3
Leadership	+1			Messing	-2
Positive role model	+1			Disrespect	-2
Project work	+1			Incorrect school uniform	-1
Class work (effort)	+1			Littering	-1
Project work	+1			Lateness (morning or for classes)	-1
Lunchtime activities	+1			Speaking without permission	-1
Perfect attendance (month)	+1			Unsatisfactory home work	-1
Perfect punctuality (month)	+1			Rough play	-1
Exam results	+1			Chewing gum	-1
Helpful behaviour	+1			Without equipment for class	-1
				Eating outside the hall	-1

\*additional sanctions may apply

This list may be altered if appropriate.

-3 : lunchtime detention

-6 : internal suspension (1 day)

-10: Friday detention