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St. Angela's School,
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St. Angela's School, Waterford.

Suspensions and Expulsions Policy.

Mission Statement.

St. Angela's is a Catholic girls' school which aims to cherish the uniqueness of each individual and to develop the full potential of each member.

Scope.

This policy applies to all students until the completion of their Senior Cycle education in St. Angela's School.

Suspension.

Definition.

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

Authority to suspend.

The Board of Management has formally delegated to the Principal the authority to suspend a student. In implementing a decision to suspend, the Principal shall adhere to The Code of Behaviour for Students of the school and paragraph 11.6 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB:2008)

In the event of the absence of the Principal on approved leave or school business, the authority to suspend is delegated to the Acting Principal or Deputy Principal, subject to the provisions of these documents.

The grounds for suspension.

Suspension is a serious sanction and should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. It may be considered in the following circumstances:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- Repeated deliberate breaches of the Code of Behaviour for Students
- The student's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to her safety / wellbeing or that of others
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property
- The student's behaviour has endangered the good name of the school
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension
- Theft
- Violence or threat of violence
- Continued or serious breach of the Personal Technology Policy
- Failure to accept lower sanctions, as outlined in the School Code of behaviour for Students.

Factors to consider before suspending a student.

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension.

Forms of Suspension.

- Immediate suspension.

The Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety or wellbeing of students or staff of the school or any other person.

- Suspension during a State examination.

This sanction must be approved by the Board of Management and should only be used where there has been a gross breach of the School Code or where there is a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination or a threat to the safety and wellbeing of other students and personnel

- In House Suspension.

Exclusion of a student for part of the school day, as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a student at home, as a sanction, is a suspension.

Where a suspension may exacerbate the educational vulnerability of the student and where resources allow, the Principal may impose an “in house suspension”. In this case, the student will be required to remain on site for a period determined by the Principal, under supervision. She will not be permitted to attend class or extracurricular activities. Appropriate written work, relating to curriculum, may be set.

Procedures in respect of suspension.

Fair procedures are followed when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the following procedures will be observed:

The student will be informed of the complaint, of pending investigation and that a suspension may ensue. Investigation will be conducted by appropriate members of the Pastoral Care structure, who will report to the Principal. The student may be removed from class during this time.

Parents and student will be invited to meet the Principal and will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified and arrangements made with them to collect their daughter from the school. A formal investigation will then be initiated with a meeting between all parties arranged for a later date. Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint before any decision is made and any further sanction imposed.

The period of suspension.

In general, a suspension should be no longer than three days. If a suspension longer than three days is proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. In circumstances where a Board of Management meeting cannot be convened in the time frame necessary, the Principal with the approval of the Chairperson may impose a suspension of up to 5 days.

No student will be suspended for more than 10 days in any one period of suspension.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student is suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Appeals.

The decision of the Principal to suspend a student may be appealed to the Board of Management by parents / guardians or by a student who has reached her 18th birthday.

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year reaches 20 days, the parents, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Implementing the suspension.

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm the following:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
- the provision of an appeal to the Board of Management, within 10 days from the date of the start of the suspension
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act : Section 29) in particular circumstances.

Grounds for removing a suspension.

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

Records and Reports.

Written records will be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision and reason for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

The Principal should report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with Tusla reporting guidelines.

Review.

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension annually to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Expulsion.

Definition.

A student is expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude her from the school, having complied with Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Authority to expel.

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student.

The grounds for expulsion.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour and should only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds ie:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety / wellbeing of other members of the school community.

There may be grounds for considering that a student be expelled for a first offence. The kind of behaviours that might result in a proposal to expel includes the following:

- Violence or physical assault, or serious threat of same, against another member of the school community
- Supplying illegal substances to other students in the school
- Sexual assault
- Gross misuse of school IT
- Gross misconduct online with reference to the school or school community
- Illegal behaviour.

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student.

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions tried to date.
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of expulsion.

Procedures in respect of expulsion.

1. Preliminary Assessment.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour which could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps will be taken:

- A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal
- The Principal will inform the student and her parents / guardians in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, the nature of the investigation and the possibility of expulsion.
- A meeting will be arranged with the Principal to give the parents and student opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and a sanction is imposed.
- If the parents and students fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will write explaining the gravity of the issue, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting, and failing that, the duty of the School Management to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour.
- A record of the invitation issued and the response of the parents will be kept on file.

2. Recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- inform the parents / guardians and student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents / guardians have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they may make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them prepare for the hearing.

3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.

The Board will review the initial investigation and ensure that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.

The Board will review all documentation and the circumstances of the case. No party who has had any involvement with the case will be part of the Board's deliberations.

If the Board decides to consider expelling a student, a hearing will be arranged.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parents / guardians, or a student aged 18 years or over, will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. Parents may wish to be accompanied to the hearing.

After both sides have been heard, the Principal and parents will withdraw and the Board will deliberate in private.

4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to decide whether or not allegations are substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify Tusla 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 Tusla receives the written notification.

The Board will inform the parents / guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Parents will be informed that Tusla will be notified of the decision.

5. Consultations arranged by Tusla.

Within twenty days of receipt of the notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a student be expelled, Tusla must:

- Consult with the Principal, parents and student
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to remain in education. Pending these consultations about the future education of the student,

the Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the student if there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety / wellbeing of other students or staff.

6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Where the twenty-day period following notification to Tusla has elapsed and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Chairperson and the Principal will be delegated to formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents will be notified that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents will be informed about the right to appeal and will be supplied with a form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be kept of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals.

A parent, or a student over 18 years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. An appeal may also be brought by the Tusla on behalf of the student.

Review.

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school annually to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

Ratification.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: _____

Date: _____