

**OUR LADY'S  
SECONDARY SCHOOL**



**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**



## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School operating under the trusteeship of CEIST according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge.

We take a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing and development of each individual socially, culturally and academically. Within our school community, each student is treated equally. All are considered uniquely talented, with effort valued as much as excellence. On a day-to-day basis, the Christian message inspires everyone in the school to be charitable, inclusive and understanding.

### ***CEIST Charter***

*The core values of CEIST are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people at the heart of our school: students, staff and parents. Its key principles focus on:*

- *Promoting spiritual and human development*
- *Achieving quality in teaching and learning*
- *Showing respect for every person*
- *Creating community*
- *Being just and responsible*

This policy is informed by and compliant with the following legislation:

- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Education (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2007
- Equal Status Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Education Needs 2004

It is also guided by 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' published by the NEWB.

In accordance with section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, responsibility for this Behaviour Code rests with the Board of Management. The Board has prepared the policy in consultation with the Principal, the Deputy Principals, the teachers, the parents of students registered at the school (through the Parents' Association and students).

In accordance with section 23.2 of the Education (Welfare) Act, this code will specify the standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school, the measures that may be taken when a student fails to observe those 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 and the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

A positive partnership between all members of the school community is essential to the operation of the code and the full support of parents is required in upholding the code. In accordance with Section 23.4 of the Education (Welfare) Act and Section 9 of the School's Admissions Policy, parents or guardians of students and/or students who have reached majority must accept the Behaviour Code as a condition of enrolment in the school. The appropriate form must be signed and returned to the school authorities as a condition of acceptance in the school.

**The scope of this code.** The rules set out below only apply when the students are on the school premises, while on trips or outings, when engaged in extra-curricular activities or when attending functions organised by the school. In circumstances other than the above, if school management is made aware of student behaviour which does not adhere to the expectations outlined in this code, engagement with the parent/guardians of the student by the school will be on the basis of school policies such as this Behaviour Code, Health and Safety policy, Dignity in the Workplace policy and the Anti-bullying policy. *(This list is not exhaustive).*

### **Foundations of an Effective Code of Behaviour**

- A fundamental principle is that respect for, and tolerance of all is an essential element of the Code of Behaviour. The code is also based on the belief that the provision of a wide curriculum will enable students to find subjects of relevance and interest to study.
- Under existing legislation, there will be no differentiation in the application of this Code of Behaviour on the basis of gender, family status, marital status, religion, age, race, sexual orientation, disability, or membership of the travelling community.
- In the application of this Code of Behaviour, whilst the first concern will be the student, it is necessary to recognise the need to balance the interests of the individual student with the overall safety and general welfare of all students and the rest of the school community; and recognises also the right to learn of all students in Our Lady's.

It is intended that the Code will create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning which allow all staff and students to work to their full potential secure in the knowledge that each member of the school community is valued and treated with respect. If procedures, rewards and sanctions are clear then standards are more attainable.

Our Lady's is an inclusive school and as such many of our students have special educational needs. The SEN Coordinator for each group will go through the Code of Behaviour, dress code and school rules with their year group at the beginning of each academic year in a way that is accessible to them, reinforcing rationale and expectations. In the event of a serious breach of discipline involving an SEN student, the SEN Coordinator will be consulted before any decisions are made or sanctions imposed. The SEN coordinator may, in certain cases, act as an advocate in support of the student with SEN.

The school is aware that our students have their own varying needs and challenges. While we expect the same high standard of behaviour of all our students, the measures set out in this policy may be applied differently in different cases depending on the special needs profile of a particular student or other relevant factors.

### **Role of Parents**

The support and co-operation of parents and guardians are essential to the effective operation of the Code of Behaviour. Parents and students are required at the beginning of each new school year to confirm in writing that they have read and agree to abide by the school rules, Code of Behaviour, code of classroom behaviour and dress code. On the part of the school, it is policy to keep parents informed before problems escalate. Parents are invited to keep closely in touch with the Year Head regarding all aspects of the children's progress in school. Parents wishing to consult with members of staff should do so by means of a pre-arranged appointment at a mutually convenient time.

The key to a successful understanding of the Code is respect:

**Respect Yourself      Respect Other People      Respect Property**

**Respect the Environment.      Respect God**

## **1. System of Rewards**

### **Rationale**

A code of behaviour is not and should not be merely a list of rules and sanctions. It should encourage a commitment to follow and contribute creatively to group enterprise, teamwork, respect and caring. It is the policy of Our Lady's Secondary School to reward positive contributions made to school life, to recognize and reinforce good standards of behaviour and effort.

### **Student Supports**

The first priority of the management and staff of Our Lady's is to ensure that all students are happy, content and fulfilled during their time at our school. There is a comprehensive support system, of personnel and structures, to assist all students who may be experiencing difficulties inside or outside of school. These include:

- Student Leaders
- Peer Mentors
- Class Tutor
- Class Teacher
- Resource Teacher
- SEN Team
- School Guidance Counsellor
- School Chaplain
- Year Heads
- Student Support Team
- Senior Management

### **Student Journal**

- The student journal is an important means of communication between teachers and parents / guardians. Notes regarding absences, punctuality and homework must be entered in the school journal and signed by the parents. Class tutors will monitor the signing of the journal on a weekly basis and will report any concerns to the Year Head.
- Students must have their journal with them every day and with them in every class. The journal is designed to help them organise their work, manage their time and review their progress. Failure to have a journal in class on a regular basis may incur a sanction. Students are not allowed to remove or alter any comment placed in the journal by a staff member nor misuse another student's journal. Misuse of the journal will result in sanction and may lead to its confiscation, in which case the student must replace it at their own expense.
- If a student loses their journal they must report it to their Year Head. The student may request a photocopy from reception to allow them some time to look for the journal. If it is not found within a reasonable timeframe the student will have to purchase a new one. Please note that journals are checked on a regular basis by Year Heads and Senior Management.

## Rewards

Student effort and behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded in a number of ways:

- Positive comments in the Student Journal.
- Telephone calls to parents to mark achievements.
- Wellbeing award notification sent home to parents/guardian via the Compass app.
- Recognition and praise for individual and group achievements by staff during interaction with students.
- Acknowledgement and praise for individual and group achievements via PA announcements.
- Highlighting the positive at Year Group Assemblies.
- Display of students' work in public areas around the school.
- Recognition of individual or group achievements in the e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram the school website as well as local media.
- Monthly Wellbeing Awards
- Phone call/letter to parents at end of year to highlight improvements and achievements
- Acknowledgement of positive behaviour and contribution to school life on e-portal.
- Highlighting the positive at Parent Teacher meetings.
- Certificates of Good Attendance.
- Certificates of Merit awarded to students for outstanding efforts either in or out of class. Also awarded for improvements in classwork, participation or behaviour.
- Election\Appointment to leadership roles –Student Leaders, Student Mentors (4<sup>th</sup> Year) Student Representative Council, etc.
- Leadership Certificates awarded to students who show recognizable leadership skills in any area of school life or a special contribution to the community at large.

There are a number of school award ceremonies where students may receive recognition of their achievements:

- End of year awards ceremony across the different year groups to recognise achievements inside and outside school not covered by the main ceremony
- Student of the Year – those final year students who are deemed to have contributed most to school life during their time in Our Lady's receive nominations for this prestigious award. One of the nominees receives the Student of the Year Award based on his/her overall commitment to school life.
- Transition Year Awards Night recognizes the commitment of students to the spirit and purpose of Transition Year.
- Awards Night is designed to recognize and reward both achievement and effort in all areas of school life.

## **2. Restorative Practice**

### **Restorative Practice**

*Circles are as old as the hills. Human beings' earliest discussions were held in circles around the fire.....a very simple and effective technology that fosters understanding and healing in a way that often seems magical"*

Helping our students resolve conflict while teaching them to take responsibility for their actions is at the core of the values based on the use of Restorative Practices at Our Lady's Secondary School.

### **When we use Restorative Circles?**

Restorative Circles are used at Our Lady's Secondary School:

- When there is conflict
- When there are bullying incidents

Circles are facilitated by the Guidance Counsellor when requested by students, parents/guardians, teachers/school staff and school management. All parties must agree and be willing to attend. The Guidance Counsellor is a trained Restorative Practices Facilitator, and can facilitate circles and conferences. Circles give all involved an opportunity to:

- Tell what happened
- To tell what their thoughts are
- To say how they or others have been affected
- To agree what needs to happen next

### **What happens during a Circle?**

To the person causing harm we ask:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

To the person harmed we ask:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- What have been your thoughts since
- How has this affected you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

### **3. Attendance / Punctuality**

#### **Rationale**

Daily attendance is essential to meet the school's academic standards. The school is bound by law to record a student's attendance record and inform Tusla, The Child and Family Agency, if a pupil has been suspended for more than six days or if a pupil has been absent for 20 days.

#### **Rules**

1. The class day lasts from 8.55 a. m – 3.55 p.m. (Wed 8.55am-1.10pm). Students should be in the school by 8.50 a.m. for morning class and 1.50 p.m. for the afternoon class.
2. Any student arriving late for morning or afternoon class must first sign in at the office and get their journal stamped.
3. A parent/guardian must complete a note from the student journal and it must be displayed at the office if:
  - A student is late for school.
  - A student must leave school during the day for a legitimate reason, this note is to be counter-signed by the relevant Year Head and a member of the Senior Management Team.
4. Parents will be informed if a student is persistently late without a valid reason and the following sanctions may be applied in sequence:
  - a. A verbal warning is given.
  - b. A reflection sheet is given. Failure to present the sheet the following day may result in lunchtime detention.
  - c. A phone call home to parents
  - d. For persistent lateness, parents may be required to sign students into school on any subsequent occasion that they are late. Failing this, students may not be allowed to attend class until the issue is resolved.
5. If a student is absent from school a message will be sent via Compass Education informing parents of the absence. If the student is absent without reason, the Year Head and / or Senior Management will follow up on this and an appropriate sanction will be applied.
6. Students must arrive for class on time during the day.
7. All students participating in extra-curricular activities must report for roll call at 8.55 am and at 1.55 p.m. Teachers involved in extracurricular activities are advised to create a 'school activity' on Compass and mark the roll once they leave the school premises with the team.
8. Students must not leave the school premises without first reporting to the relevant Year Head and the Principal or Deputy Principals. They must present a note of explanation, using the relevant blank notes in the journal. Having been granted permission to leave the student must present the note at the office and the office staff will note this in the sign-out book. Any breach of this rule is a very serious matter. Parents/Guardians are requested not to make routine dental, optical or medical appointments during normal school hours.
9. It is recommended that family holidays, that would necessitate a student's absence from school, should not be arranged outside official holiday periods.
10. Parents will be informed if a student is frequently absent without a reason by regular phone calls from a member of the Senior Management Team. After 10 days absence a letter and record of attendance may be sent to parents informing them of days missed. Schools are legally obliged to report all absences over 20 days to the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **4. Uniform/Appearance**



## **Rationale**

This rule is necessary in the interest of hygiene and health. Uniform is a definite mark of identity, is economical and removes undue pressure, distraction and competitiveness in the school community.

It is the intention, at all times, to maintain the integrity of the school uniform. As fashions are constantly changing and students are always imaginative and forward-looking in relation to innovations which may breach the spirit if not the letter of the code it may be necessary to update the code during the course of the school year. In such circumstances, the Council of Discipline will be the final arbiter of what is acceptable.

Our Lady's Uniform Policy is as follows:

- Pupils must be clean and tidy and wear the full, correct uniform to school, during school and when returning from school.
- Full uniform must also be worn on school-related activities unless given permission by the Principal/Deputy Principals.
- Hair must be clean and tidy and tied up, if long.
- All items of uniform should be labelled with pupil's name (ideally on the inside of the item of uniform)
- Jackets should be placed in lockers/bags when not in use.
- In the case of a foot injury requiring the wearing of runners, students must have a doctor's/specialist note, countersigned by the Principal/Deputy Principals prior to admittance to class.
- Students are allowed to wear their PE gear to school on the days that they have PE or sports-related modules. Any student that does not wear the correct uniform the Year Head and / or Senior Management will follow up on this and an appropriate sanction will be applied

The uniform consists of:

### **BOYS**

Navy gabardine trousers (belt, if worn, must be plain black)  
Official school v-neck jumper with school crest  
Sky blue shirt and school tie  
Official school jacket with school crest/name  
Plain black or navy leather shoes, navy or black socks  
Navy or black hat and scarf

### **GIRLS**

Official school check skirt or navy uniform trousers (belt, if worn, must be plain black)  
Official school v-neck jumper with school crest  
Sky blue shirt and school tie  
Official school jacket with school crest/name  
Plain black or navy leather shoes, navy or black socks or tights  
Navy or black hat and scarf

### **P.E.**

Pupils must have appropriate sportswear for P.E. class which will include the following:

- The School PE sweatshirt. If a student has not got a School PE sweatshirt they must wear a plain navy/black sweatshirt.
- Plain navy/black leggings or tracksuit bottoms. The bottoms may have a small logo on them however no large logos or stripes down the side of the bottoms are permitted.

### **PRACTICAL CLASSES**

Protective clothing and goggles must be worn as instructed.

**Runners (of any colour or make)** are not permitted – except for P.E./games or on presentation of a Doctor's/Specialist cert.

*Note: No other variation of uniform is permitted.*

*Pupils must have shirts and ties neatly arranged.*

***IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE UNIFORM THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT PERMITTED:***

#### **Make-up:**

Students are not allowed to wear any form of make-up while in school uniform. This includes:

1. Eye shadow, liner or mascara.
2. Foundation or blusher
3. False tan/ artificial colouring
4. Lipstick/Gloss
5. Nail varnish/ nail art or gel nails or extensions of any kind

#### **Jewellery:**

The following are not permitted:

1. All body piercing with the exception of one small stud in each ear.
2. Neckbands/chains
3. Large rings- only one small ring permitted on each hand

#### **Clothing:**

The following are not permitted:

1. T-shirts which are visible under the school shirt.
2. T-shirts visible below school jumper.
3. Coloured socks.
4. Decorative belts.
5. Boots, canvas shoes or runners of any description.
6. ~~Hoodies.~~
7. Slit in trousers, skirts or frayed hems.
8. Non-school jackets, scarves or hats.

### **Hair:**

Drawing up and enforcing rules in relation to acceptable hairstyles in a fair and equitable manner is extremely difficult. The following is an attempt to set out rules in a clear and unambiguous way.

1. In the interests of hygiene, and for health and safety reasons, students may be asked to tie back their hair.
2. Shaven part or full head is not permitted. Extremely tight haircuts are not acceptable.
3. Symbols/designs cut into hair are not allowed e.g. tracking.
4. Students must be clean-shaven.
5. Unnatural hair colours, including bleached hair, are not allowed.
6. Streaks are not allowed.
7. Students are not permitted to constantly change their hair colour.
8. Students are not permitted any other exceptional or extreme hairstyle which is deemed inappropriate.
9. The Council of Disciplines' decision about what constitutes unacceptable haircuts /styles shall be binding.

### **Other:**

1. Tattoos must not be visible.
2. Fashion accessories are not permitted e.g. hair decorations; wrist decorations, tooth embellishments, etc.
3. Students are not permitted to wear any symbols; badges or memorabilia other than those sanctioned by the the Council of Discipline for a specific purpose.

Breaches of the Uniform Code will result in sanctions. A student not wearing full uniform or in breach of any of the above may not be allowed attend class until he/she complies with the Code. Persistent breaches of the Uniform Code may result in suspension.

## **5. In the Classroom**

### **Rationale**

In Our Lady's it is necessary to have courtesy and respect for all in the classroom. This is to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for teachers and students. Positive classroom behaviour facilitates climate conducive to effective teaching and learning.

### **Rules**

1. Students are always required to enter the classroom quietly in an orderly manner and on time and await teacher instructions.
2. Students are expected to sit in their allotted seat unless the teacher requests that they change.
3. Correct uniform must always be worn in class.
4. Outside garments such as coats scarves and hats must not be worn in the classroom without the express permission of the supervising teacher.
5. Students should take out books and materials for class without having to be told.
6. In Junior Cycle textbooks are the property of the school and should be treated with respect. Textbooks should only be written on if instructed to do so by the teacher.

7. Students are expected to produce homework on time or present a legitimate excuse, from parents or guardians through a note in the journal, at the beginning of class.
8. Involvement in extra-curricular activities is not an acceptable excuse for not doing homework. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on work missed in class and /or homework. Failure to do so may result in the student being removed from the relevant activity along with other sanctions.
9. Students must participate positively in the work of the class and co-operate fully with the teacher's instructions.
10. In class, the journal must be visible on the student's desk. The journal must be well maintained at all times.
11. If a student is late he/she must get their journal stamped in the office. They must present the journal to their teacher upon arrival in class.
12. A sick child must notify the class teacher before absenting themselves from class.
13. Any unauthorised absence from class will be regarded as truancy and will be dealt with accordingly.
14. Under no circumstance may a student publicly challenge or question a teacher's decision or authority in class
15. Students must refrain from interrupting class to question a teacher's decision. If a student feels that they have been misunderstood or treated unfairly they should wait until the end of class and politely request the opportunity to discuss the matter privately.
16. Disrespect and defiance to any member of staff, permanent or substitute, will be viewed as a very serious breach of discipline. It warrants immediate withdrawal from class and may include suspension and interview with parent(s) or guardians.
17. From time to time a teacher other than the usual subject teacher may take a class. This may be due to the absence of a teacher, a visiting teacher passing on particular information or a trainee teacher. Under these circumstances, students are expected to behave to the highest standards and all classroom rules continue to apply. Any student abusing such a situation will receive an appropriate sanction.
18. Any attempt to intimidate a teacher physically, verbally or by any other means will be viewed as a most serious breach of discipline and an appropriate sanction will be imposed
19. Mobile devices may not be used in class unless with the teacher's permission and under their supervision. The device must be used solely for the purpose indicated by the teacher. Students may not leave the classroom without the teacher's permission. Permission to leave the classroom should only be sought for illness or some other emergency.
20. Eating and/or chewing gum is prohibited in the class.
21. Fizzy drinks/energy drinks or High Caffeine drinks are prohibited.
22. Breaking, damaging or defacing classroom furniture is unacceptable. Students will have to bear the cost of replacement and /or repair in addition to any other sanctions which may be imposed.
23. Students must adhere to the specific rules and regulations governing specialist areas such as Science Laboratories, Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Technology, Art, Computer rooms, Home Economics rooms as well as the Gym and all-weather playing pitch.
24. Students must follow the fire drill code during fire drills and/or fire evacuation as directed by the teacher.
25. Students are expected to follow all public health advice before, during and after class.

## **Homework**

- Homework is regarded as an extension of classwork and as a preparation for the next day's work. It is also seen as a way of measuring students' progress. Students are expected to do all homework assigned each day by the teacher and to revise the work that is done in class to the best of their ability. Homework includes written homework, learning homework and revision.
- Following are school guidelines, it is expected that the amount of time spent on homework is as follows:
  - First Year: 1.5 hours
  - Second Year: 2.5 hours
  - Third Year: 2- 3 hours
  - Fourth Year: 1.5 hours
  - Fifth Year: 2-3 hours
  - Sixth Year: 3 hours
- All homework must be written into the student journal by the student. Failure to complete homework may result in disciplinary action. If for some reason the assigned homework is not done or fully completed a note in the journal from the parent / guardian explaining why is required.
- With the increased focus on student independent learning it is important that students recognise their responsibilities and adhere strictly to all guidelines around the submission of project and examination work.
- The school will support the students' efforts at homework through regular monitoring and assessment of the quality of homework presented.
- Parents / guardians are expected to foster and encourage a positive attitude in their child to homework and study through regular supervision of homework completion and monitoring of the student journal.

## **6. General**

### **Rationale**

Our Lady's school community consists of over eight hundred individuals (students and staff). The rules outlined below are intended to create a healthy, safe, orderly and enjoyable environment for all. It is only with the co-operation of everyone that the resources of the school can be used to maximum benefit

### ***Personal and School Property:***

1. Students are responsible for their own belongings and must label clearly each item of personal property. Anything of value to be kept in a skirt/trousers pocket. No money or valuables should be left in coat pockets, in the cloak-room, in schoolbags. All unlabelled items are disposed of at the end of each term.
2. Students should never take anything that does not belong to them as this is stealing.
3. Students should never hide another person's bag or belongings.
4. Our Lady's Secondary School does not accept responsibility or is not liable for damage caused to school property or student property, including motor vehicles at any time.
5. Students' motor vehicles should not be parked on school property for insurance purposes.

6. Students are not permitted to use their lockers at any stage during the day.
7. Students are prohibited from interfering with teachers' belongings either in the classroom or outside. Students are not permitted to be in the vicinity of teachers' or visitors' cars.
8. Students found interfering with cars or other personal property may face temporary or permanent exclusion. Students are not permitted to use roller skates, skateboards, wheelies (runners with wheels) while on the school grounds.
9. Non-verbal communication using signals or gestures which are intended to be abusive or rude is unacceptable and will incur sanctions.
10. On occasions when the snow has fallen students are expected to remain indoors at break-time and lunchtime and follow the instructions of the teachers that are supervising at that time. The throwing of snowballs is prohibited at all times and may incur a sanction.
11. Inappropriate or intimate physical contact is unacceptable during the course of the school day or school-related activities, or while in school uniform.
12. In the interest of the general body of the school community, it may be necessary at times to search a student locker, bag or belongings during the investigation of a particular issue – for example, theft or substance abuse. Students are entitled to the same personal rights, right of privacy and defence of human dignity as anyone else. Accordingly, a search of a locker, bag or belonging of a particular student may only be undertaken if:
  - The Principal, or in the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principals or senior member of staff, determines there is sufficient evidence to suggest the person may be responsible for the theft of property, possession of a dangerous weapon or possession of an illegal substance.
  - Permission is obtained from a parent/guardian to institute such a search in the absence of the parent/guardian, or the parent/guardian has indicated a wish to be present when the search is instigated.
  - Another person of authority (e.g. parent, member of staff) is present. The school also reserves the right to confiscate a student's phone where it is necessary to prevent the distribution of inappropriate images of another student.

### ***Personal Health and Safety:***

1. Students are expected to follow the one-way system that is in place around the school.
2. When necessary students are expected to adhere to public health guidelines at all times when in school and when at school-related activities.
3. Students are not permitted to run on corridors or around the school or to push or jostle other students. Students must follow the school one-way system as instructed. Loud and unruly behaviour is not permitted.
4. No more than one student is permitted inside a toilet cubicle. If students are caught in breach of this room the relevant sanction will be imposed.
5. Bags must not be left in doorways, stairwells or within confined areas, especially on connecting corridor between GPA and old building. Extra care should be taken on all stairways. If a stairway is designated as one way this rule should be followed at all times.
6. The rules of the road should be obeyed whether the student walks, cycles or travels by bus to and from school. If travelling by bus or car the student should always use the seat belt provided. Patience, courtesy and care should be shown to all who use the roads and footpaths. Students should be particularly careful and well behaved on school buses especially when getting on and off.

7. Students should promote their own health and that of others. Smoking, e-cigarettes and vaping are forbidden in the school, school grounds, in the vicinity of the school and on any school outing/activity or in school uniform. Alcoholic drink and drugs are banned and any breach will be viewed as extremely serious.
8. Any student who is known to be involved in supplying or procuring drugs either on the school premises or otherwise will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Substance Abuse Policy.
9. Students are prohibited from eating or congregating in licensed premises, arcades or pool halls during the school day (including lunchtime)
10. A student may only use the lift by prior arrangement with the Principal or Deputy-Principals. They may be accompanied by one other student if necessary

***Respect for All and for the School Environment:***

1. Students must show due respect to all adults in, or visiting the school, including teaching and ancillary staff. One should always stand back to allow adults a priority. When moving around in a group consideration should be given to others. Students should walk in small groups of two or three rather than large groups.
2. Outside school hours students should continue to show courtesy and respect to their parents and family, to their teachers at all times, to civic and church authorities and to all members of the community. They should be aware of others when using footpaths.
3. If a student is being bullied/intimidated or is aware of other students who are being bullied/intimidated he/she should bring the matter immediately to the attention of his/her Tutor, Year Head, Teacher, Student Leaders, the Principal or the Deputy Principals. This matter will be dealt with in line with the schools Anti Bullying Policy.
4. Students should take pride in their school and its environment. It should be kept clean and beautiful. Students are asked to use the appropriate bins for waste and recycling items including sanitary waste. Students are not permitted to litter or damage it in any way. Graffiti will not be tolerated. Students found defacing or damaging school property will be required to pay for the costs incurred by the school and their parents/ guardians will be contacted.
5. The throwing of flour, eggs, water or any such material is not allowed under any circumstances.
6. Possession of fireworks, laser guns, stink bombs or any similar goods is viewed as a serious breach of school rules.
7. School management is not in favour of the growing trend of students driving cars or motorbikes to school. We encourage students to use the transport available. Students are prohibited from parking cars or motorbikes on the school premises due to the limited parking available and for insurance purposes.
8. Parents are requested not to enter the school grounds to drop and collect students as this endangers the safety of students walking and also causes congestion.

### ***Digital and Electronic Devices:***

1. Laser Pens, M.P.3 players, i-pods and other electronic devices are not permitted. All devices capable of recording voice/sound, devices capable of emitting sound and devices capable of emitting light beams or images must not be used during the school day.
2. All handheld game consoles and other such gaming devices are also banned from school life and all school-related activities.
3. All students must sign the school's ICT (Information Communication Technology) acceptable usage policy. Students are permitted to use the school's ICT equipment for educational purposes only. Students must not use ICT equipment to create, convey or generate (i.e. print or any other means) obscene or unsuitable material. In accordance with the ICT Acceptable Usage Policy, students may use the internet for educational purposes only. Students are not permitted to use the following websites or other sites which would be deemed inappropriate.
  - a) Sites containing inappropriate material.
  - b) Social networking sites the list of sites is not exhaustive and the Council of Discipline will decide on a case by case incident.
  - c) All personal email sites.
  - d) Mobile phone sites.
  - e) Texting or image texting sites.
  - f) Video sites.
  - g) All music sites.
  - h) Gambling sites.
  - i) Engaging in illegal or inappropriate activity
4. Students who are found to be in breach of the ICT acceptable usage policy may face exclusion from use of ICT equipment (regardless of course requirements) or sanctions under the Code of Behaviour including where necessary suspension or expulsion. The sharing or storing of explicit images of oneself or another student is unacceptable and is absolutely prohibited behaviour with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

### **7. Lunchtime and Break-time**

1. Primary School, Convent and St. Mary's Hospital grounds, Canon's Yard and the far side of the gym are out of bounds for all our students during Junior and Senior break time and lunchtime. The zone which has purple doors is out of bounds during lunchtime. The shutter will be opened 5 minutes at the end of lunchtime to allow students to go to their lockers.
2. Senior students are allowed to leave the school premises through the main gate and Iontas gate at lunchtime provided they have a lunchtime pass. Junior students may not leave the school grounds unless they do so under the supervision of a member of staff. Any student who leaves the school premises without permission will receive the relevant sanction.
3. Students are encouraged to go outside and get fresh air at break and lunchtime during periods of good weather.
4. If the weather is cold and wet students are allowed to stay inside and will have their break in a designated classroom. Students are expected to be in the classroom that they had before / after break / lunch. Students are to ensure that the classrooms are neat and tidy at the end of break and lunch.
5. Students are encouraged not to congregate in the areas around Iontas Arts and Community Resource Centre before or after the school day. If on Iontas grounds and in school uniform students are bound by the Code of Behaviour, including a total prohibition on smoking, vaping or other illegal substances. Breaches of these rules will result in sanctions being applied.



6. School bags should not be left in areas where they are likely to cause an obstruction and bag racks to be utilised.
7. Loud or unruly behaviour will not be tolerated.
8. The use of the Gym and All-Weather Pitch at break and lunchtimes is governed by health and safety considerations. Numbers using these facilities will be restricted for these reasons. Rough or dangerous play will result in permission to use these facilities being rescinded.
9. Students should return to class when the first bell rings or when asked by a supervising teacher. They should be outside the relevant classroom before the second bell rings.
10. Students who have a legitimate reason for not returning in the afternoon must bring in a note outlining the reason; get it signed by the Year Head and Principal or Deputy-Principals. The student then presents this note to the office and the secretary will sign them out before leaving the school premises. If verification is needed the parent will be contacted by phone. If a student has an unplanned afternoon absence he/she must furnish a note to the Year Head on his/her return.

### **8. Outside School**

1. Our Lady's Secondary School is very proud of its reputation and views its students as ambassadors of the school. The Board of Management recognises that even while students are off the school grounds, their actions may directly affect other members of the school community or the standing of the school in the broader Castleblayney community
2. When outside the school on trips or outings, students are expected at all times to maintain high standards of consideration for others and, through their conduct and good manners, maintain the good name of the school. They must comply, without question, with all specific and reasonable directions given by those in charge as well as complying with any other rules or regulations set down by the venue being visited.
3. In certain cases, the school reserves the right to apply the principles of this Code of Behaviour to incidents which occur outside of school and/or outside of school hours. (Whether on a school tour or excursion or not). The school may, in its absolute discretion, choose to deal with alleged behaviour which occurs outside of school grounds or outside of school hours as if the alleged misbehaviour had occurred during school time or on school grounds. While the circumstances of each case will be examined individually, the school may exercise this discretion in circumstances where the incident in question harms or creates a risk of harm to any member of the school community (or their property) or where the incident is significant to the standing or reputation of the school itself.

### **9. Mobile Phones**

Our Lady's Secondary School is promoting a 'phone-free' environment. A student bringing a phone to school must carry it in a Yondr pouch. Students may not use phones during the times of the school day or during school activities unless given permission by a teacher. Each student will be assigned a personal Yonder Pouch. It is each student's responsibility to bring their Yondr Pouch with them to school each day, to keep it in good condition and not damage it and to report to the Year Head if there are any issues with their Pouch.

#### **Daily Process**

All students should have their pouches open on arrival at their first class at 8:55am. At the beginning of tutor class at 8:55am, students will be asked by their teachers to:

- Turn off or silence their phone.
- Place their phone inside their Pouch and secure it in front of the teacher/tutor.
- Store their phone away in the pouch for the day.
- At the end of the day, students will un-pouch using the unlocking stations in the GPA and can have access to their phones as normal.

**Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/un-pouch their phones at the office.**

**Authorised use of phone during school day**

Phones may be un-pouched by teachers in class throughout the school day where the teacher feels the use of a phone will be of benefit in teaching and learning. Teachers will follow the procedures outlined in our school Mobile Phone Policy.

**Un-Authorised use of phone during school day**

**If a student uses their phone or is found without their phone in a pouch throughout the school day the following sequence of sanctions will apply:**

**1st Time**

The staff member will send the student to the link person in Senior Management and will email them to alert them of the phone incident. Year Heads will contact parents. The phone will be confiscated and held until the end of the school day. The student may collect their phone from the link person in Senior Management at the end of the day. The Year Head will record a red card (via compass) and evening detention will be issued to the student.

**2nd Time**

The staff member will give the phone to the link person in Senior Management and will email them to alert them of the phone incident. Year Heads will contact parents and be informed that their son/daughter has been found without their phone in a Yondr pouch for a second time. The phone will be confiscated and held until the end of the school day. A parent/guardian must come in to the school to collect the phone. A red card (via compass) and evening detention will be issued to the student.

**3rd Time**

The staff member will give the phone to the link person in Senior Management and will email them to alert them of the phone incident. SMT will contact parents and inform them that their son/daughter has been found without their phone in a Yondr pouch for a third time. The Phone will be confiscated and held until the end of the school day. A parent/guardian must collect the phone and a meeting with parents will be required.

Further sanctions will be applied as in the normal manner where students repeatedly fail to comply with the rules of the school.

**Forgotten Pouch**

If a student forgets their pouch, they will go to the Deputy Principal who will pouch their phone for the day. It will be kept in the Deputy Principal's office and student can collect it at the end of the school day.

If a student consistently forgets their pouch, a parent meeting will be required.

**Lost or Damaged Pouch**

Any loss or damage of the pouch which renders it unusable will result in the student purchasing a new pouch at a cost of 10 Euro.

1. Videoing or recording another person (staff or student) without their knowledge and consent whether on school premises or outside of the school is an invasion of privacy and any student caught doing so will face sanction.
2. Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging do not fall within the definition of bullying and are dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour. However placing a once-off offensive message, image or statement on a social network site or public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
3. In relating to sexting or the sharing of inappropriate messages, this can have a serious negative effect on a student and may constitute both harassment and the distribution of child pornography.
4. All incidents involving creating, storing or sharing of explicit or sexually suggestive images of children under the age of 18 may be reported to the Gardai or TUSLA. The possession or distribution of such material will be taken very seriously by the school and may result in prolonged suspension or the permanent exclusion of the students(s) involved.

**The Board of Management reserves the right to modify or vary the school rules in the event that unforeseen circumstances arise that require such modification or variation at short notice where the interest of the pupils, staff or the school requires it. Any such amendment will be communicated to the school community.**

## 10. Sanctions

### **Rationale**

The school may apply a range of sanctions appropriate to the circumstances and seriousness of each individual case. These are tiered in nature to ensure a just and equitable approach that respects the dignity of all involved and depending on the seriousness of the breach of discipline in question. These include:

1. A verbal warning
2. A note home to parents in the school journal
3. Incident recorded on Compass e-portal
4. A phone call to parents
5. Additional appropriate written work as per written guidelines
6. Reflection Sheet
7. Rescinding of lunchtime pass
8. Lunchtime detention
9. Parents invited to a meeting
10. Evening detention
11. Saturday morning detention
12. The student may be put on report
13. Withdrawal from a specific subject for a limited period of time.
14. Withholding of access to specified school facilities if inappropriate behaviour has taken place.
15. Internal suspension
16. Removal from a school trip or extra-curricular activity
17. Immediate removal from class.

- 18. Suspension
- 19. Expulsion

Restorative circles and restorative practice by trained staff at Our Lady's may be used to resolve disputes and bullying issues. Participation in restorative sessions is encouraged as a means of dispute resolution. However, such participation does not prevent normal disciplinary sanctions applying to students where a school investigation has found the code of conduct has been breached.

## **SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION POLICY**

This policy relates to sanctions that the school management may adopt when dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour. This policy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners – the Board of Management, teaching staff, parents/guardians and students.

1 The purpose of suspending a student from school is to provide the student with time for reflection, to emphasise the seriousness of specific misbehaviours and to give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour.

1.1.a The Board of Management has delegated authority to the Principal to suspend a student for a period up to and including five days. If a suspension for longer than five days is being proposed, the matter must be referred to the Board. In such a case, having sought approval from the Chairperson of the Board, the Principal may suspend for longer to allow for time to convene a Board meeting. The Board will not normally impose a suspension of more than 10 consecutive school days.

1.1.b Suspension will normally be imposed for a grave offence, as defined in this policy. Further to this, where in the opinion of the Council of Discipline, Senior Management Team, and/or Principal or Acting Principal, detention or warning are inadequate disciplinary responses to serious offences, or in the instance of repeated serious offences, the sanction of suspension may also be imposed. Such incidences may involve:

- A threat to the safety of others and to self
- Actual violence or assault against a member of the school community
- Abusive or threatening language towards a member of the school community
- Undermining the dignity of members of the school community
- Serious disruption of teaching and learning and the orderly atmosphere of the school
- Deliberate damage to property
- Interference to the school security or fire alarm systems
- Being involved in a fight or serious physical altercation
- Instances of bullying as per the schools Anti Bullying Policy
- Misuse of technology
- Substance abuse
- Persistent breaches of the Code of Behaviour which have not been rectified by the normal school interventions.
- Truancy

(this list is not exhaustive)

1.1.c Other than in the case of immediate suspension (6.1.e below), before a suspension is imposed, the Principal, mindful of the investigation report from the relevant Year Head, will have considered the seriousness and context of the behaviour; the impact of the behaviour on the other members of the school community; the interventions that have already been implemented with the student involved (where relevant) and the likely impact of the suspension on the particular student.

#### 1.1.d Suspension Procedures.

The alleged incident will be investigated by Senior Management and/or the Year Head to determine the facts of the situation. This will involve an interview with the student(s) in question and any witnesses to the event.

Following the report from this investigation, should the Principal / Acting Principal decide that it is appropriate to suspend a student, the following procedure will be implemented:

Before the suspension is imposed, the student and his/her parents will be contacted and the matter will be explained to them. Every effort will be made to request and to facilitate the student/ parent/ guardians to meet with the Principal and/or Acting Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head at a specified time acceptable to all parties, so as to afford them a full opportunity to comment on the disciplinary action being considered.

If the student/parents/guardians fail to attend such a meeting and fail to provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the matter will be determined in their absence and the suspension carried out. The student and parents/guardians will be informed in writing that the suspension has been imposed, the date from which the suspension takes effect and the period of the suspension.

In the event of the student/parents/guardian attending such a meeting, if having heard the student/parents/guardians, the Principal considers that it is proper and necessary that suspension be imposed, s/he may suspend on such terms as s/he considers appropriate.

Confirmation in writing will be given to the student/parents/guardians that suspension has been imposed, the date from which such a decision takes effect and the period of the suspension. Parents/guardians will be fully informed of their right to appeal the decision to suspend to the Board of Management.

A suspension is understood to mean that the student does not have permission to be present in the building and is under the care of their parents/guardians for the day/s in question. A student coming into the school during suspension will be deemed to have flouted the behaviour code and this is considered a grave offence.

1.1.e Without prejudice to the foregoing, where the Principal or Acting Principal has been notified of an alleged grave offence and where immediate suspension is deemed necessary for Health and Safety reasons, the Principal, (as per EWB guidelines p75), following a preliminary investigation and without prior notice to the students/parents/ guardians, may suspend a student with immediate effect for such a period as is deemed appropriate, pending a full investigation of the alleged offence.

Official notice of such suspension will be confirmed in writing to the student/guardians/parents/ and the period of the suspension indicated. The matter will then proceed as per section 6.1.d above.

1.1.f Following the imposition of a suspension, the Principal will notify the Board of Management of the suspension. Under Section 21(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, where a student is suspended for a period of not less than six days, the Principal will forthwith so inform the Educational Welfare Officer by notice in writing.

1.1.g Following a period of suspension, the student, accompanied by his/her parent/guardian, is required to present himself/herself to the Principal or Deputy Principals on returning to the school, before going to any class. At this meeting the Principal/Deputy Principals will review the case, and decide what structures are required to support the student in returning to school and in addressing the behaviour which led to the suspension.

## **2 Appeals of suspension**

A suspension imposed by the Principal can be appealed to the Board of Management as follows:

2.1.a An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Management within 5 school days of the imposition of the suspension and should set out the parent's case against the suspension.

2.1.b At its next meeting, the Board will nominate two members, neither of whom should have any involvement in the case, to investigate the issue and report back to the Board with its findings and recommendations. (A recording secretary for the sub-committee may be included).

2.1.c If this investigation recommends that the Board remove the suspension, the record of the suspension will be removed from the student's file. If the investigation approves the suspension then the suspension will stand.

2.1.d There is no further right to appeal unless the student's cumulative suspensions in any one year exceed 20 days, in which case there is a right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. The Principal must inform the parents and the NEWB if this 20 day limit has been reached.

## **3 Review**

The Board will monitor the frequency of the use of suspension as a disciplinary measure and will regularly review the procedures to ensure that it is being used fairly and appropriately and in the best interests of the entire school community.

## **Expulsion**

4.1.a Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. This Authority may not be delegated.

4.1.b Expulsion of a student is a very serious step and will only be taken by the Board.

4.1.c Where there is significant and continuing disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.

4.1.d Where there is a serious threat to the health and safety of the student him/herself, other students or members of staff.

4.2.a Where the student is uncontrollable and is not amenable to any form of school authority.

4.2.b Where parents refuse to exercise their responsibility for the student in accordance with this Behaviour Code

4.2.c Where the student's behaviour is detrimental to sustaining the ethos of the school

4.2.d In cases of specific behaviour such as

- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal / mood altering substances.
- Sexual assault and indecent sexual behaviour
- Deliberate serious damage to property.
- Serious misuse of technology.

4.3 Other than in exceptional circumstances (section 7.4. below), before considering expulsion, the school will have taken significant steps to address the student's behaviour. These steps may include:

4.3.a Meeting with parents and the student to endeavour to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.

4.3.b Ensuring that the student understands the possible consequences of his/her behaviour, should it persist.

4.3.c Ensuring that other possible options have been given a fair trial to bring about an improvement in behaviour through an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP).

4.3.d Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

4.4 However there may be circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence where the issue is grave and/or of such a serious nature as to warrant that sanction. Due process and fair procedures will be followed in all cases and the principles of natural justice will apply.

#### **4.5. Procedure for expulsion**

4.5.a The Principal will ensure that there is a thorough investigation of the incident. The student may be suspended from school while this investigation is taking place, if this is deemed necessary, in accordance with section 6 above.

4.5.b The Principal will inform the student and the parents, in writing, of the details of the alleged misbehaviour and the possibility that it could result in expulsion.

4.5.c The student and parents will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a final decision is made. If the final decision is that the Principal intends to recommend expulsion to the Board of Management then the parents will be invited to a meeting with the Principal before the recommendation proceeds to the Board.

4.5.d The Principal will provide the parents and the Board of Management with records of the allegations, the investigation and also the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.

4.5.e The parents will be notified of the date of the Board of Management hearing and will be invited to attend. They will be given adequate notice of the meeting and will be informed that they may make a written and oral submission to the Board. The written submission may be made in advance.

#### **4.6. The Board of Management Hearing**

4.6.a The Board will ensure impartiality and no Board member who has had any involvement in the circumstances of the case will take part in the hearing.

4.6.b At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student who is eighteen years or over, will put their case to the Board in each other's presence.

4.6.c Parents may wish to be accompanied at such hearings and the Board will facilitate this. There is no right to legal representation in this process.

4.6.d Neither Principal nor parents will be present when the Board is making its decision.

#### **4.7. Following the Board Decision**

4.7.a Where the student and his/her parents/guardians attend the meeting with the B.O.M., and the Board, having heard the student and/or his or her parent/guardian, form the view that it is necessary and proper to impose the sanction of expulsion, the Board, before making the decision to expel the student, will notify, in writing, the Educational Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons therefore, in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

*Where the student/parents/guardians do not attend the meeting:*

If the student or his/her parent/guardian fail to attend the meeting with the B.O.M. and fail to provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the B.O.M. will determine the matter in their absence. Before making a decision to expel the student, the Board will notify, in writing, the Educational Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons therefore, in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

4.7.b Where it is decided to impose the sanction of expulsion, the student and his/her parent/guardian will be informed by letter by the Board that the sanction of expulsion has been imposed and the date from which decision will take effect. The student will not be expelled from the school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt by the Education Welfare Officer of the notification. In the interim, the Board may, in accordance with section 5 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, suspend or make other arrangements to ensure that 'good order and discipline are maintained in the school'.

#### **4.8 Involvement of the Education Welfare Officer**

4.8.a Within this twenty day period, the Education Welfare Officer will convene meetings with relevant parties to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education.

4.8.b While these negotiations are taking place, and before the expulsion is finalised, the Board may consider it necessary to continue the student's suspension from school. This task may be delegated to the Principal or Chairperson.

4.8.c After the twenty days has elapsed, where the Board remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the decision will be formally confirmed to the parents and the student in a registered letter signed by the Chairperson and the Principal.

4.8.d The parents will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the appropriate form. This appeal is made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

#### **The appeals process through the Department of Education**

Pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there is a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against a decision of the Board of Management or of a person acting on behalf of the Board to permanently exclude a student from



the school or to suspend a student from attendance at the school for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days in any one school year. This right of appeal can be exercised by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, by the student. The school will advise the parent/guardian and/or student of the right of appeal and associated timeframe when notifying them that the relevant sanction has been imposed.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent/guardian or student. As a general rule, appeals will only be considered by an appeals committee under section 29 where the parties are unable to resolve the issue at local level. Accordingly, the appellant and the Board of Management will first consider the matter at local level to determine if an accommodation can be reached.

Appeals to the Secretary General must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeals Application form (a copy of which can be obtained from the school or from the Appeals Administration Unit of the Department of Education and Skills) and addressed, by signed letter, fax or e-mail to the Appeals Administration Unit of the DES. The appellant should at the same time notify the school of the appeals or, alternatively, send a copy of the completed Application Forms to the school.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: June 1<sup>st</sup> 2023

Date of Review: June 2024

Chairperson of Board of Management:



### **Code of Behaviour: Parent/ Guardian & Student Agreement**

We / I have read the Code of Behaviour of Our Lady's Secondary School and undertake to support it to the best of our / my ability. We / I also understand that from time to time Our Lady's Secondary School may need to update their Code of Behaviour and other policies. We / I accept that it is our / my responsibility to remain informed of these changes communicated to us by the school.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class & Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A student may not attend Our Lady's Secondary School if the Code of Behaviour is not signed.