

Carrigallen Vocational School Code of Behaviour

Links to the Mission Statement

This policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states that:

“We aim, through positive interaction to recognise each individual’s uniqueness and to develop each individual’s potential in our school community.”

Rationale

1. To have a written Code of Behaviour, as required by the Department of Education and Youth.
2. To ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles, values and educational philosophy of the school.
3. To involve all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on the Code of Behaviour in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.
4. To maintain order in a large organisation.
5. To clarify expectations of behaviour.
6. To outline rewards and sanctions.
7. To make parents and students aware of procedures for dealing with misconduct and infringement of school rules.
8. To make parents and students aware of procedures for suspensions and expulsions.

Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour outlines expectations for behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour. The behaviour expected is based on creating an environment of mutual respect.

An Environment of Mutual Respect

Carrigallen Vocational School recognises that the majority of students behave very well and understand the necessity of good order in classrooms and in the school. Good discipline in school helps to create an atmosphere where each student feels secure and is taught to accept responsibility for their actions.

There are three main elements to good behaviour:

1. Self-respect.
2. Respect for others.
3. Respect for the Environment.

Self-respect means that:

- I work to my potential. I am attentive in class and conscientious about my studies, this involves doing my class work and homework to the best of my ability.
- I develop a sense of personal responsibility for my behaviour.
- I am honest, courteous and punctual.
- I wear a full uniform to school and take pride in my personal appearance. I understand that the school rules prohibit the use of make-up, the wearing of rings, studs etc. in noses, lips, eyebrows etc. Other jewellery, apart from those mentioned above, must be kept to a minimum as per our Uniform Policy.
- I keep my journal (which is school property), my books, copies, school bag and all equipment in good condition, this includes not defacing my journal, books or equipment.
- I realise that by breaking the Code of Behaviour, I face a sanction which is the consequence of my behaviour.

Respect for others means that:

- I realise that the rights of the teachers and the classroom assistants to carry out their duties in the classroom. My actions must not prevent them from carrying out their duties in a safe and cooperative environment.
- I treat others as I would like them to treat me.
- I am friendly and kind to others.
- I must be in time for class, having with me my iPad, books, copies and equipment required for the particular subject.
- At the commencement of each class, I should be seated quietly, preparing my work.
- I must have my iPad fully charged each day to proceed with its use in class.
- I realise that any disruption on my part prevents others from working and concentrating. I have to be particularly careful that I am not seeking unnecessary attention.
- I realise that all students have a right to an education, and my actions should not prevent other students receiving this right to education.
- I avoid any activity which might endanger the safety or well-being of others.

- I recognise, respect and appreciate the special role of the school staff and visitors to our school.
- I avoid causing unnecessary work for those who care for the school.
- I leave areas such as classrooms, toilets and other school areas clean and tidy and ready for others to use.
- I explain absences from school with an appropriate written note from my parents/guardians using the notes provided in my school journal.
- I must respect other students, staff and school possessions, this means I must not take them or deface their property in any way.

Respect for the environment means that:

- I take pride in keeping the school clean, tidy, and free of litter and graffiti. I do not use chewing gum, Tippex or any form of liquid eraser, temporary or permanent board markers.
- I place my chair on the desk at the end of the school day to facilitate the cleaning of the classroom.
- I show care, not just for the school, but also for the means of transport I use to and from school.
- I am courteous and mannerly in the school, its grounds and all public places.
- I may only consume food or drink in the assigned lunchrooms at the designated times.

Involvement in School Activities

Involvement and interest in school activities helps to boost morale and gives an indication to us of a student's ability to integrate in society. Therefore, student participation in sport, debates, concerts and other extra-curricular activities is welcome.

Awards/Rewards and Affirmations

1. The individual teacher may adopt an award system for his/her class.
2. Each student receives an individual report on his/her progress at least twice a year.
3. T.Y., Fifth and Sixth Year students may receive references at the end of their academic year if requested.
4. Annual prize-giving ceremony. This may include some or all of the following:
 - Student of the Year awards for all year groups.
 - International Student of the Year award.
 - Sporting Achievement awards.

- Student Enterprise awards.
 - Subject and Project awards at Junior and Senior Cycle.
 - Spirit of CVS Award
 - Students who achieve unique individual goals.
 - Students who have shown great personal development during their school life.
 - Certificates for Excellent Attendance.
 - Certificate of participation in various activities.
5. Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied students each receive a personalised school medal on completion of their education.

The Student Journal

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature:

Parents are encouraged to check that their child's school/homework is fully completed each evening, that any study has been done and that any project work/assignments are fully completed by the scheduled deadline.

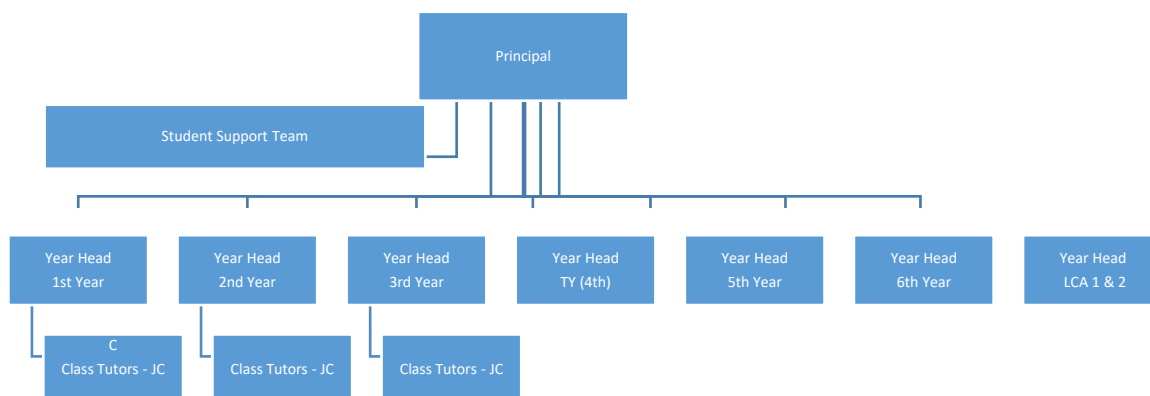
All subjects should be filled in for each day and the subsequent homework for each subject including study/revision. Homework details may also appear on the Showbie App on their iPad.

Student Absences from School

- (i) Parents/Guardians are asked to phone the school secretary if their child is likely to be absent from school for more than two days.
- (ii) When a student returns to school after an absence of one or more days, they will be expected to provide an explanation for their absence on two sets of notes to be found at the back of the Student Journal. On return to school, the detached absence note must be posted in the box beside the principal's office for the attention of Ms. Beirne.
- (iii) When a student reaches 20 days in cumulative absences during a school year, the school is legally obliged to report these absences to the National Education Welfare Board. (N.E.W.B.)
- (iv) The National Education Welfare Board may contact parents/guardians if their child is absent for twenty cumulative days or if the child is absent regularly.

The Class Tutor and Year Head System

Each class group from First Year to Sixth Year will be divided into two, or three groups and Junior Cycle classes will also be assigned a Class Tutor for that group.



Class Tutor:

The Class Tutor meets with his/her class group for a 40-minute weekly Tutor class. During this time students complete the Student Reflective Journal. The Tutor can also use this time for class discussion on issues relating to school policy, code of discipline, study skills or arising topical issues that may be affecting the Wellbeing of the group in general. This specific tutor time is therefore part of our allocated time for student Wellbeing.

Year Head:

Year Heads will endeavour to meet their groups once a term to go through different school issues and/or policies. The Year Head is also available for individual students to speak to during term time. The Year Head can make appointments to see students to discuss arising or ongoing issues.

In recognition of the importance of communicating with parents Year Heads set up a dedicated 'Year Head Folder' for their year group within the electronic Showbie App which is used by students on their iPad. The Showbie App is also available for parents to download/access via www.showbie.com. Each student has an individual folder within the Year Head folder.

The school uses the VSWare communication platform for teachers to record attendance and also to record both positive and negative signatures related to behaviour. Parents can log in to VSWare to view signatures, term reports and choose subjects options.

Repeated misbehaviour or ongoing issues regarding homework completion will result in closer observation of the student overseen by the Year Head. This may include:

3 negative signatures in a week:

Student is assigned an 'Initial Report' card and text message sent to parents.

7 negative signatures in a month:

Student is assigned an 'Initial Report' card and text message sent to parents.

'Initial Report':

Students must present their report card to the teacher at the start of each class each day for a designated period of 5 days. The teacher signs this at the end of each class. A parent/guardian must sign the report card each evening. If the report card shows that the student has continued to misbehave then they will be put on 'Principal's Report'.

Principal's Report:

Students must present this report card to the teacher at the start of each class each day for a designated period of 5 days and continue as above with parent/guardian signing the report each evening. If on completion of Principal's Report, there is no improvement in behaviour then suspension will be considered. (See further details on Suspension below).

In addition, it is at the discretion of the Year head to use a 'Student Observation Form' at any time where it is deemed to be beneficial for the purposes of observing and monitoring key areas which include:

- Behaviour,
- Staying on Task,
- Listening and Paying Attention and
- Organisation (iPad, diary, books, copies, equipment, etc.) and rates the student effort as Poor/Satisfactory/Good/Very Good in each area.

The Year Head fills targets in at the top of the 'Student Observation Form'. This form is then taken by the student into every class and given to the teacher at the start of class.

Breaches of School Code of Discipline

The following list is designed to clarify instances of misbehaviour and also more serious breaches of discipline

Misbehaviour

- Non-stop talking in class.
- Coming late for school/class.
- Ongoing failure to bring relevant class materials including charged iPad.

- Misuse of iPad – see CVS iPad Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Misuse of mobile phone – see CVS Mobile Phone Policy.
- Challenging teacher authority.
- Ignoring the presence of the teacher in the classroom.
- Blatant refusal to follow instructions or to comply with requests.
- Throwing paper airplanes/pens/missiles.
- Walking aimlessly around the classroom.
- Using inappropriate language in class and during break times.
- Making noise or humming.
- Rummaging in bags.
- Taunting or pushing.
- Shouting other students down.
- Eating in class, chewing paper, pens etc.
- Chewing gum on School grounds.
- Copying of homework.
- Failure to present homework, or attempted homework.
- Failure to wear school uniform.
- Failure to obey school rules regarding make-up and 'jewellery'.
- Failure to provide relevant notes e.g. Absence Note in Journal, notes for appointments, for leaving school early, etc.
- Failure to produce journal when asked.
- Failure to have mobile phone turned off during class time.
- Littering.
- Graffiti and defacement of property.
- Interfering with correspondence...letters or notes addressed to parents. Sealed envelopes addressed to parents/guardians should not be opened by students and should be delivered promptly.

Less evident and yet equally disruptive behaviour includes:

- A careless attitude towards one's studies.
- Negative attitudes to learning and authority.
- Non-attempt of homework on an ongoing basis.

Serious Breaches of Discipline:

- Bullying.
- Threats to teachers, and damage to their property.
- Fighting and physical assault of peers.
- Open defiance of an insolent and deeply offensive nature.
- Using foul or obscene language with no regard for boundaries.
- Remarks to staff and others of an overt sexual nature.
- Misuse of iPad – see CVS iPad Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Misuse of mobile phone – see CVS Mobile Phone Policy.
- The carrying of dangerous weapons into the school environment.
- Leaving School during school time without permission.
- Truancy.
- Vandalism.
- Copying at exams.
- Missing school without appropriate authorisation.
- Smoking/abuse of substances as per CVS Substance Abuse Policy.
- Theft.
- Forging parents'/guardians' signatures on notes, in journal etc.

In the event of a serious incident which falls within the category of criminal behaviour, the Gardai may be informed and/or their advice sought. Some issues which may be of a criminal nature may result in a Garda investigation.

Sanctions

- Teacher may advise/warn student that his/her behaviour is unacceptable.
- Teacher may re-assign the student's seating or request him/her to stand up.

- Teacher may write one/more negative/positive comments using the VSWare portal for communication to parents.
- Teacher may assign written punishment/ non-study exercise.
- Teacher may refer the student to the Year Head.
- Where appropriate a student may be referred to the Deputy-Principal/Principal/Guidance Counsellor.
- The Principal / Deputy-Principal / Year Head /Class Tutor /Class Teacher may request the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to attend school to discuss the problem.
- The Principal may suspend the student for a given number of days for the following:
 - Serious breaches of conduct.
 - Persistent ongoing misbehaviour.
- Expulsion will be imposed if the behaviour of the student continues to disrupt the order of the school and creates an environment where learning is disrupted and student safety is endangered:

The school authorities reserve the right to suspend or expel any student whose conduct threatens his/her educational, social or moral development or that of his/her fellow-pupils.

Guidelines for Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension

[Suspension ...Extract taken from 'Guidelines for Schools: Code of Behaviour' NEWB 2008]

"For the purposes of these Guidelines, suspension is defined as:

Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days."

Forms of Suspension

1. Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, 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 of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

2. Suspension during a State Examination

This sanction should normally be approved by the Board of Management (the Board may delegate to the Principal) and should only be used where there is:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination.

- A threat to the safety of other students and personnel.
- A threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

The sanction should be a proportionate response to the behaviour. For example, it would rarely be appropriate for a first offence, unless there is a threat to the good order of the conduct of the examination. This sanction should be treated like any other suspension, and the principles and fair procedures governing suspensions should be applied. The D.E.S. Best Practice Guidelines concerning Certificate Examinations offer guidance to schools.

3. 'Automatic' Suspension

A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

Suspension as a Sanction

The Principal of the school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act (2000), Section Law Act 21, to inform the N.E.W.B. in writing if a pupil is suspended for six days cumulatively. All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management for noting and review.

The authority to suspend a student rests with the Principal of the school, subject to the rights of the parents/guardians (or of a pupil who is over eighteen years) to appeal to the Board of Management. Suspension is a serious sanction and will only be imposed where other efforts to resolve a disciplinary situation have failed or where the nature of the incident dictates that the student be removed from the school immediately.

Circumstances in which suspension might be considered could include.

- Repeated incidents of indiscipline in spite of warnings and counselling by staff.
- Failure to recognise and submit to legitimate authority.
- Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the rights to learn of other students.
- Particularly serious incidents which endanger the welfare of the student or of others.
- The student breaches any of the serious misbehaviour definitions as outlined in the Code of Behaviour.

These are examples for information purposes and the circumstances are not restricted to these instances.

Notes will be kept of all incidents or events which might be called upon to support a decision to suspend.

Suspension Procedure

The School Authorities will contact Parents/Guardians to discuss events which have led to the consideration of suspension. Parents/Guardians will be informed, in writing, of the reason for the suspension, the period of the suspension and the requirements which must be fulfilled to gain reinstatement. Parent/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to suspend and the procedure to be followed in making such appeal.

Students will not be dismissed from school unless and until arrangements are made for their safe return to the care of their families.

Records will be kept of all meetings and/or telephone calls in connection with the suspension.

Upon completion of a suspension, the following procedures may apply for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school

- Parents/guardians will be requested to attend a meeting with the student upon their return to the school.
- A written apology may be required from the student co-signed by parent/guardian for the misbehaviour.
- The student may be required to enter into a contract of good behaviour, co-signed by a parent/guardian, setting out conditions that may be specified before returning to school.

Student Wellbeing – Supporting the Student on their Return following Suspension

In order to help prevent the recurrence of behaviour that resulted in the suspension of a student the school has a number of strategies aimed at encouraging the student to review their behaviour, identify behaviours that are the source of conflict and give them an opportunity to work on improving/ eradicating this behaviour in a supervised manner. This gives the students responsibility for their own behaviour. This will involve the co-operation of the student, their parent(s)/guardian(s), the Year Head and the student's class teachers. This approach involves a number of steps:

1. Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will meet with the Year Head and, if necessary, the school Principal/Deputy Principal, at an agreed time on return to school.
2. The student will be presented with a list of behaviours and asked to identify behaviours that they feel they have engaged in that have been a source of conflict. They will also be asked to identify who they think is affected by this behaviour. They complete this form at home with the co-operation of a parent/guardian.
3. This completed form is then presented to the Year Head. The Year Head and student will discuss and agree on a plan, going forward, for the student to target some of these behaviours and make an effort to improve them. The student could begin with two or three targets at first.
4. The Year Head fills these targets in at the top of a 'Student Observation Form'. This sheet is then taken by the student into every class and given to the teacher at the start of class. The teacher observes four key areas:
 - i. Behaviour,

- ii. Staying on Task,
 - iii. Listening and Paying Attention and
 - iv. Organisation (iPad, diary, books, copies, equipment, etc.) and rates the student effort as Unsatisfactory/Satisfactory/Good/Very Good in each area.
5. At the end of the week (5 consecutive days of attendance) the Year Head and student will examine the completed form to see if there has been an improvement in behaviour or otherwise.
 6. If necessary, the process with the Student Observation Form may be repeated for multiple behaviour targets.
 7. Any failure to improve will be noted by Year Head and parent(s)/guardian(s) informed and the school discipline policy will be applied.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the most severe sanction of the school's disciplinary procedures against a student. It will only be imposed for very serious breaches of school rules or in cases where the rights of a greater number of students are being denied because of continual disruptive behaviour of an individual

If the Principal is going to recommend to the Board of Management that a student should be expelled, the student will first be suspended by the Principal. During the suspension period parents/guardians (or of a student who is over eighteen years) can make a case on behalf of their child to the Board of Management. It is a decision of the Board of Management to impose the expulsion.

Each step in the process will be conducted in the presence of a witness and contemporaneous notes will be kept. The following steps will be followed.

- The case against the student will be put to him/her and he/she will be given the opportunity to respond. The parents/guardians will be informed of the grounds upon which expulsion is being considered, and the nature of evidence being relied upon.
- The parents/guardians will also be provided with a fair opportunity to consider the evidence and offer evidence in rebuttal.
- Having considered all aspects of the case if the Principal decides to recommend to the Board of Management that the students being expelled, he/she will inform the student's parents/guardians in writing of the decision, the reason(s) for it and of their right to make representations to the Board of Management on behalf of the student. In the interest of the student, parents/guardians will be required to give notice to the Secretary of the Board of Management of their intention to make such representation no later than the specified date to enable an early hearing by the Board of Management.
- The parents/guardians are entitled to seek access to the student's file and to documentation relevant to the expulsion save for any part of the same that infringes the right of privacy of another or other students is privileged.

- Arrangements will be made at the earliest possible date for a joint meeting of the Board of Management with the Principal and the Parents/Guardians. No information which has not previously been made known will be introduced at this meeting. The student may need to stay suspended from school pending the decision of the Board of Management.
- When the Board of Management has heard all the evidence, the Principal will withdraw to allow the Board to consider the case. Even though the Principal is the Secretary of the Board of Management he/she will not be party to the consideration of the case as he/she is an involved party. Further the Board of Management will ensure that any member of the Board of Management who might have a conflicting interest will be excused and not participate in the decision.
- To ensure its independence as the final authority in the case, the Board of Management will not be involved in the process leading to the decision of the Principal to recommend the expulsion of the student.
- If the recommendation of the Principal is rejected, it is a matter for the Board of Management to decide on what conditions, if any, the student will be allowed back to school.
- If the recommendation of the Principal is approved the parents/guardians or (or of a student who is over eighteen years) the student will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Chief Executive Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education & Training Board, Newtown, Castlebar, Co. Mayo and subsequently, if necessary, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29, Education Act, 1998.
- Where a Board of Management has taken the decision to expel a student the National Education Welfare Board and designated Welfare Officer will be informed of its opinion and the reason therefore. A student shall not be considered expelled before the passing of twenty school days from the receipt of such notification by the Education Welfare Officer. The student will remain suspended for twenty days until the Expulsion Order takes effect.

Protocol and procedure for excluding a Student from School by a Board of Management (Section 24, Subsection C, Education Welfare Act, 2002 and Section 29, Education Act, 2000)

A decision by the Board of Management to expel a student will be communicated by the Secretary to the Parents/Guardians by registered post as soon as possible after it has been taken. At the same time the decision will be communicated to the Education Welfare Officer. The expulsion will take effect once twenty school days have passed after the Education Welfare Officer has received this notice, pursuant to the provision of Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of the precise date.

Evaluation /Review

This policy has been passed by the Board of Management and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Plan for reviewing the Code

In the light of ever-changing circumstances in our educational system, there is a need for frequent review and evaluation of the Code. This Code will be reviewed at regular intervals and where necessary. The review will include both the experience and opinions of the students, teachers, other staff and parents. It in turn uses the information and analysis to plan ways to strengthen positive relationships of respect and trust and also help build a shared commitment to the values and ethos of Carrigallen Vocational School.

Reviewed:
April 2011, October 2015, March 2017, April 2018, September 2020 – Covid 19 procedures, September 2021 – Covid 19 procedures and ETB amendment, May 2022, May 2025.