

Virginia College

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Code of Behaviour

Scope of Policy: This code applies to students of Virginia College and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours. This policy has been drawn up as an interim policy and will be reviewed in consultation with all the school partners, including Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students. This policy is in line with National Educational Welfare guidelines.

Relationship to school's mission, vision and aims:

This policy has been developed in line with the mission of our school which has at its core, the care of the student. The school strives to provide a safe secure learning environment for the development of our students. Our school code of behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others and our environment, so that a positive and cooperative school atmosphere prevails.

Rationale

Many people work together in our school each day and therefore a high level of courtesy and consideration for others is necessary. Behaviour, which is ill mannered, annoying, dangerous or disruptive cannot be allowed. Our code is one that is based on respect for oneself, for others and our environment, so that a positive and cooperative school atmosphere prevails.

Goals/Objectives

The aims of our code of behaviour are:

- To create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- To have effective procedures in place which will allow for the day to day running of the school and which meet the demands of current legislation
- To help students mature into responsible and participating citizens
- To allow for the appropriate involvement of all school personnel

- To ensure understanding by the parents, students, staff and management of the Code of Behaviour and the reasons for it
- To outline the strategies to be used to prevent poor behaviour and the ways in which positive behaviour is acknowledged
- To outline the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions that will be used in response to negative behaviour
- To outline the interventions to be used when a student repeatedly misbehaves

Roles and Responsibilities

The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and the behaviour of everyone in the school. Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in strengthening positive relationships of respect and trust. The school expects that students will, always do their best to uphold the code of behaviour of our school. See section 8.4 of the NEWB guidelines for more information on the roles and responsibilities of adults within the school environment.

Parents/Guardians

The school acknowledges the role of parents/guardians in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour and expects them to support the code and encourage their sons/daughters to uphold it.

Teachers

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is a powerful influence on behaviour in the school. The code fosters relationships of trust between students and teachers. The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour. The school recognises that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning, but that they also have a pivotal role to play in behaviour management. That pivotal role forms a core element of this code. We have teachers assigned to each class and year group with special responsibilities for operating the code. Subject Teachers, Class Tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Learning Support Teachers, Psychological Services, Other Agencies, Pastoral Care team, Deputy Principal and Principal all have specific roles to play in upholding the code.

Other Staff

The school acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful operation of our Code of Behaviour. In particular they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness.

Board of Management

All policies are developed with the authority of the Board of Management and must be approved by its members and formally approved and confirmed by Cavan and Monaghan ETB, before becoming official school policy. While members of the Board of Management are not involved in the day-to-day procedures, they are the body to whom parents and students over 18 may appeal in cases of suspension or expulsion. The adults in the school

have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students. Parents/Guardians are expected to model the standards that the students are asked to respect. The ways in which parents and teachers interact provides students with a model of good working relationships.

School Rules

School Rules apply whenever you are wearing the school uniform, when representing the school or when engaged in any school activity. School rules describe in simple terms how to behave in order to learn well and to develop into mature and responsible adults They are there to safeguard students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach in a caring, safe and respectful environment. Therefore ...

We expect

1. That you come to school every day and arrive on time
2. That you come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy
3. That you have respect for people and property
4. That you do your best in class and at your homework
5. That you come in properly prepared for your subjects
6. That you act in an appropriate manner around the school

School Rules Explained

1. That you come to school every day and arrive on time. This means:

- That you are in the school at 8.45 a.m. daily
- That you attend school every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- 'Mitching' is regarded as being a particularly serious breach of the rules
- That if you miss school, a record of your absence is recorded by your parent/guardian on the school's VsWare app, which is also accessible via the school website
- That if you are unavoidably late, a record for your lateness is recorded by your parent/guardian on the school's VsWare app. It is your responsibility upon arrival at school to **first sign-in at the Main Office and then proceed to class.**
- That if you are sick during the school day and need to leave the school, permission must be sought from class teacher/Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal and a **parent/guardian must sign you out in person from the school office.**
- **For students 18 years or older who are representing themselves if you** must leave school during the day, direct correspondence must be made with the Principal or Deputy Principal or in their absence, the designated member of staff and a reason for your leave must be recorded by you on the school's VsWare app prior to signing out at the office.

- **If a student undertakes to sign themselves out from school without adhering to these guidelines, then with will be deemed as a serious breach of this policy and the appropriate sanction will be applied.**
- That you proceed to all classes without delay and arrive on time
- That you do not go to the toilets/lockers between or during classes without your teachers' permission
- That you behave yourself on your way to and from school
- Enter the school through the designated doors
- That you behave on the school buses

Because

- Time missed is hard to make up
- The school is entitled to an explanation for your absence
- It is expected that a late arrival to school be explained out of courtesy
- Arriving late for class wastes your time, the teacher's time and class time
- Going to the toilets/lockers during or between class disrupts learning
- The school rules apply on your way to and from school

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the daily timetable and to co-operate with its implementation. The efficiency of Virginia College as a learning environment is largely dependent on attendance and punctuality. The College therefore expects the following of each student:

- All students must be present for Tutor Class at 8.48 a.m. having all the necessary books and equipment for all the timetabled classes.
- A record of attendance is carried out each morning by the class tutor and by subject teachers for each class.
- Any student who has been absent from school must ensure a record of your absence is recorded by your parent/guardian on the school's VsWare app.
- If a student is absent for a total of 20 days from school, the Education Welfare Board will be notified by the school.
- Dental and medical appointments should be made outside school time where possible
- The school cannot approve of students being withdrawn from school for holidays or non-medical reasons during the school year.
- The safety and welfare of our students is a primary concern. Virginia College considers unauthorised absence from school as a serious breach of school discipline. Parents/Guardians will be notified, and sanctions will be applied.
- Rewards are issued for students with perfect attendance each term and year. Certification is also issued for students with several years' good attendance. .

2. That you come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy. This means:



Our School Uniform

	<p>Correct male uniform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round neck navy jumper with crest • Pale blue shirt • Grey trousers • Black trousers
	<p>Correct female uniform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round neck navy jumper with crest • Pale blue shirt • Plaid skirt / Navy trousers • Black shoes
	<p>Correct unisex fleece</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy crested fleece
	<p>Correct school jacket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New O'Neills crested VC jacket • Previous VC crested jacket
	<p>Correct PE uniform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O'Neills Parnell style crested half zip • O'Neills Parnell style crested round neck sports shirt • O'Neills Parnell style crested tracksuit bottoms

- You always wear the full school uniform in school except, when otherwise directed by the school

- You are required to bring and to wear the specified sports gear for participation in timetabled P.E (Physical Education). classes, sports training, and sports competitions. Junior students may wear their PE uniform on the day of timetabled PE.
- You should have a neat, tidy, and natural looking hairstyle. Hair stencils, tattoos, designs/patterns etc. cut or shaved into the hair are not permitted.
- Hats and scarves are to remain in your school bag for the duration of the school day. Coats, jackets, and sweatshirts are not permitted in class and should be left in the locker. Only the Virginia College crested jacket and fleece can be worn in class.
- Smoking and Vaping is forbidden anytime you are wearing the school uniform, when representing the school or when engaged in any school activity.
- Jewellery is limited to two finger rings, one discrete studded earring in the lower lobe of each ear and a wristwatch. A single discrete flat stud may be worn in the nose. Eyebrow, lip, septum & tongue piercings are not permitted.
- Student makeup will be discrete

Because

- You should wear your uniform with pride, be dressed suitably for school activities and be a good ambassador when representing the school
- Hair style/colour should be in keeping with a dress code suitable for school
- Hats and scarves can be a distraction and a danger in class
- Smoking/vaping is unhealthy. Students should always be good ambassadors of their school
- Wearing eyebrow, lip, septum & tongue piercings can be dangerous in the context of health and safety.
- Make up can cause discolouration of school uniform and can be damaging to certain skin conditions.

3. That you have respect for people and for property. This means:

- Being helpful and treating other students, all staff, and visitors to the school with good manners and respect
- Respecting the instructions of your teachers and staff
- Any form of bullying is unacceptable
- That you should proceed in an orderly fashion around the corridors and across the school yard.
- That you don't use offensive or abusive language
- That you use the litter bins in classrooms, in social areas and in the school grounds
- That you respect the school property and the property of other people
- Report any accidental damage you may have caused or seen to the main office

Because

- Like you, other students are entitled to good manners and respect.
- Staff are entitled to your respect and co-operation
- Bullying causes fear, hurt and misery
- Rough behaviour can lead to accident or injury.
- Offensive or abusive language shows disrespect and can cause hurt
- Keeping the school environment pleasant and litter free is everyone's responsibility
- You would expect the same respect for your property
- The school authorities might have no other way of knowing if damage is caused to property or equipment

Theft and Vandalism:

Each student has the right to expect respect for his personal property and possessions. Therefore, it follows that its Code of Behaviour requires of students that they, always, respect the property of other students and the property of Virginia College. Vandalism, which is understood to mean the breakage or defacing of any piece of College, is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. Theft of College property or the property of others constitutes an equally serious breach.

4. That you do your best in class and at your homework. This means:

- That you listen in class to your teachers and/or SNA's
- That you contribute to class and participate in class to the best of your ability
- That you do not interfere with teaching and learning
- That you don't disturb the class
- That you sit in your assigned seat in an orderly manner
- That you do your homework each night, written and oral and to an acceptable standard. Leaving books at home or in the locker is considered as non-presentation of homework
- That you always have your School Journal with you and take down your homework in it
- That you get your journal signed by your parent/guardian at the end of each week available for presentation to your Class Tutor on Mondays
- That if you need to leave your classroom, you must get permission from your teacher with a note of explanation in your school journal
- If you are required by another teacher, that teacher must note this in your School Journal, and you must present this note to your timetabled teacher at the start of the class
- That you help keep your classrooms tidy

Because

- The teacher is trying to help you
- Disturbing the class is unfair to others who wish to learn
- Homework is a back-up to the work done in class
- Your School Diary helps you remember what you have to do

- Getting your School Diary signed lets your parents see how you are getting on
- Getting your School Diary signed to leave the classroom helps keep a record of your time missed and lets other teachers know that you have permission to be out of class
- It is important to take responsibility for tidying up after ourselves.

5. That you come in properly prepared for your subjects. This means:

- That you have the proper pens, books and copies and other materials required for each class
- That you bring in any special materials and equipment needed for class
- All bags, books and Student Diary be kept in good condition and free of graffiti.
- That you are responsible for your own property

Because

- It only wastes time if you haven't got your pens, books etc.
- It is impossible to do the subject without the materials/equipment needed
- Graffiti can offend.
- Neatness helps students stay organised. Label clearly each item of personal property

6. That you act in an appropriate manner around the school. This means:

- You proceed quickly and quietly to each class, taking the shortest route
- You wait quietly for your teacher while lining up outside the classroom
- You should walk in the school, and you should avoid pushing or jostling other students. You should avoid loud and unruly behaviour both inside and outside classrooms. Running or messing in the corridor can lead to accidents or injury. Sanctions will be applied to students who misbehave in the corridor
- You go to your locker only before class begins in the morning, at small break time, at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Students must maintain the provided lock on their locker at all times. The school will not accept responsibility for lost or stolen items. Students are expected to keep their lockers clean and tidy
- You should avoid loitering in the toilets during break times or at any other times, only 1 student at a time in toilet cubicle.
- That eating and drinking is allowed only in the canteen area and outside eating areas and only at specified times. Students are expected to be respectful and polite to canteen staff. All litter, left-over food items and recyclables must be put in the appropriate bins and any spillages created should be cleaned up. Students are expected to be respectful and polite to canteen staff. Instructions given by supervising staff should be followed and students should return to class when instructed.
- Taking your break in the manner and area specified and obeying the instructions of the teacher on duty
- That you don't break, damage or deface school property
- That you must report to a teacher should you notice graffiti or damage to school property and especially if you notice graffiti on your own desk or chair
- That chewing gum is totally forbidden in the school building and grounds

- That you do not bring cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vapes, lighters, or matches to school
- That there is an absolute ban on knives, lasers and any type of offensive weapons
- That you leave your mobile phone in your locker, powered off, during the school day as the use of mobile phones is not permitted at any time.
- That you leave all electronic devices at home.
- That the production, display or circulation e.g., via Snapchat, Bereal, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook and internet, of written words, pictures or other materials which may intimidate, embarrass or erode the reputation of another person is totally unacceptable.
- Alcohol and illegal substances are totally forbidden
- You may not photograph or record in school without your teacher's permission

Because

- Orderly behaviour helps to run the school smoothly
- Going to the locker during or between classes detracts from learning and disrupts others.
- Loitering in toilets leads to congestion
- Specified times and places for eating/drinking helps to keep the school clean and pleasant
- Obeying break time rules and teachers' instructions is safer and helps with supervision
- Others have to use the school property and repairs and replacements are expensive
- Everyone is responsible for helping to keep the school environment pleasant
- Chewing gum destroys flooring, school furniture, tarmac etc. It is a possible health hazard
- Smoking/Vaping on the school premises is prohibited by law, and besides, it is unhealthy and dangerous
- The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices is disruptive during school time
- Matches and lighters are dangerous. Also, this makes it easier not to be tempted to smoke
- Knives, lasers etc. are banned for very obvious reasons
- Substance abuse is dangerous, unhealthy, addictive and illegal. It can cause misery and in the longer term may even destroy a young person's life

Boundaries

The College boundaries are clearly defined, and each student is made aware of the restrictions that apply. 'Boundaries' is taken to mean interior and exterior limits of access for students. Lough Ramor, Deer Park Forest and the lake road are considered out of bounds – including any time before or after normal class when students are in uniform. Virginia College boundaries are there for the safety and protection of the student body. The college has a responsibility for the students in its care, and so must be aware of where students are at all times. A regular breach of the College boundaries will be deemed as a serious breach of the College Code of Behaviour.

Students travelling by bus or car

Students travelling to Virginia College by bus are not allowed get off or on buses up town in the morning or afternoon respectively. Students who travel to school by bus are expected to travel home by bus. Students who avail of school transport are expected to enter and remain on school grounds upon arrival. Virginia College officially opens each morning to receive students at 8.30 a.m. with formal supervision by College staff in operation. Prior to 8.30 a.m. the school doors are left open to facilitate staff entry. We have noticed that parents/guardians/buses are dropping children off in advance of 8.30 a.m. and students are entering the school building at this time. It is important to note that Virginia College does not offer supervision until 8.30 a.m. and parents/guardians cannot have any 'expectation of supervised care' of their children until 8.30 a.m. **Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the course of the normal school day, unless they are signed out by their parent/guardian (prior permission requested) or as part of a school event.**

School Trips/Games/Activities

Students of Virginia College undertake many school outings during the year. The College will ensure that safe methods of transport are used.

- Students must conduct themselves in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and refrain from any anti-social behaviour.
- Any student whose VsWare points have fallen below 85 points may be precluded from participation in school teams and school trips. Students who have been suspended or are under investigation for breach of the Code of Behaviour may be withdrawn from school trips.
- All instructions issued by teachers/supervisors/organisers etc. must be followed.
- Students' participation on school teams activities is conditional on the student completing both classwork and homework provided by the teachers during the school day
- Virginia College reserves the right to remove students who are not wearing full school uniform from attending school events.

Sport

- **Participation:** Participation in sport is a pivotal aspect of school life in Virginia College. Students are required to be punctual for PE classes or sports games, both home and away. Students must wear the appropriate PE uniform when participating in PE classes or playing competitive matches and must wear the College uniform when attending away matches.
- **Supporting:** Students supporting teams must behave in a manner that reflects positively on Virginia College. Offensive songs, chants and provocative actions do not form part of providing vocal support for the College's teams, and will not be tolerated

Pornography/Offensive Material

- Student must not access or have possession of pornographic or offensive material. The possession and/or dissemination of pornographic material constitutes a serious breach of the College's Code of Behaviour. All students are required to adhere to and sign the College's Acceptable Usage Policy. A breach of this policy is subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion.

Fighting

- Physical fighting is regarded by the College community as unacceptable behaviour and, as such, will always be viewed as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour, and is subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion

Alcohol

- Virginia College views with concern the consumption and abuse of alcohol among people of all ages, including the young. The consumption of alcohol while the student is under the care of the College is strictly prohibited. On no account may students being/share'/sell alcoholic drinks on Virginia College property and/or during College activities. Students who attend Virginia College under the influence of alcohol will have breached the Code of Behaviour and may be subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion for the College.

Drugs

- The use by a student of prohibited drugs (as defined in Virginia College Substance Misuse Policy – ***A drug can be defined as any chemical that causes change in the way a person functions, wither mentally, physically or emotionally and includes prescription drugs and 'legal highs'***) while he/she/they is a student of Virginia College is strictly prohibited. This relations to all school activities both during and outside normal school hours. Any student who uses banned substances, or provides them for another student, will be liable to immediate suspension, and/or expulsion, from the College.

Smoking/Vaping

- In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, it is the policy of the Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board to ensure, so far is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all staff and to protect students/learners, visitors, contractors and other persons at school from injury and ill health arising from any work activity. Smoking of tobacco products is already prohibited in CMETB premises, as workplaces, by Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003.

Electronic smoking/Vaporising Devices

Definition e-cigarettes are battery-powered devices. They heat nicotine mixed with flavourings and other chemicals to create an aerosol that the user inhales.

As advised by the HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme Vaping is an emerging risk to the health of children and young people. Vaping devices and any associated vaping products are strictly prohibited from Virginia College. Any student who is identified as vaping or provides another student(s) with vaping devices or substances to support vaping, will be subject to a suspension to from the College. If there is a suspicion that students were engaged in vaping and appropriate sanction will be applied.

Risks of harm caused by vaping among children and young people Vaping is harmful for children and young people for many reasons:

- E-cigarette use has been linked with acute harms including poisonings, burns, fractures, lung injury and asthma exacerbations.
- Early evidence links E-cigarettes use to cardiovascular and respiratory tissue damage.
- E-cigarettes often contain nicotine, which is addictive and leads to dependence.
- Children and young people are especially vulnerable to the effects of nicotine on their developing brains including nicotine addiction, mood disorders, and lowering of impulse control.
- Other drugs such as alcohol, synthetic cannabinoids, and opiates can be added to E-liquids and consumed through vaping.
- Finally, children and young people who use E-cigarettes are more likely to start smoking compared to those who never used E-cigarettes.
- There is no conclusive medical evidence for or against the safety of e-cigarette/vape use especially long term, or the potential effects of passive exposure to emissions from e-cigarettes/vapes. The World Health Organization is of the view that safety of e-cigarettes/vapes has not been scientifically demonstrated and the potential risks they pose for the health of users remains undetermined. E-cigarettes/vapes remain unregulated as either medicine or food product.
- Because e-cigarettes/vapes resemble ordinary cigarettes, their use may promote or renormalize smoking, disrupt the environment for non-smokers, make it harder for smokers to quit and for the CMETB to support the smoke free policy. The use of e-cigarettes/vapes and or other electronic tobacco replacement products is banned from all CMETB schools.

Personal Relationships

Students' personal relationships should not be displayed publicly in the college environment, for example; holding hands, kissing, hugging etc.

Because

- Being overly affectionate at school can be offensive and is generally in poor taste.
- The expression of feelings toward one another is a personal concern between the two individuals and this should not be shared with others in the general vicinity.
- This type of behaviour is a distraction and inappropriate for a school setting.

Preventative Measures

In Virginia College students will be encouraged in their efforts to uphold the Code of Behaviour by use of the following measures:

- (a) The Code of Behaviour will be published on the school website and a summarised version is published in the Student Journal. Students and their parents are asked to read it and to sign their agreement with the content when registering. By doing so they acknowledge their support and co-operation with it. This is to ensure that parents and students understand what our rules are, why they must be adhered to and what procedures will be followed if the rules are not upheld.
- (b) Aspects of the code are explained at the information meeting held each year for parents of incoming First Years. Parents are encouraged to contact their son/daughter's Tutor or Year Head if they wish to raise a concern about a behavioural matter. Parents are invited to get involved in the Parents' Association or to avail themselves of the meetings organised by the association.
- (c) At the start of each school year, the Code of Behaviour is explained to all students. This is done to give students the opportunity to think and talk about behaviour, learning and rules so that they can understand what the Code of Behaviour means for them.
- (d) The Code of Behaviour is published in the Teachers' Handbook. At the beginning of the school year teachers are brought through the main aspects of the implementation of the code. This is done to promote consistency of practice.
- (e) We recognise in Virginia College that effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour. When students are engaged and motivated to learn, it is more likely that their behaviour will be positive. Teachers are encouraged to participate in continuous professional development. Within school, staff development includes exploring different teaching methods such as Assessment for Learning and differentiation. Regular Subject Department meetings address curriculum needs and promote collegiality among staff.
- (f) If a student is in breach of a rule, he/she may be asked to explain (orally or in writing) the rule he/she has breached, to describe what effect this breach has had on members of the school community, and how he/she could act differently in the future to avoid being in breach of the rule. This is done to develop the student's sensitivity and consideration for others and to assist them in upholding school rules in future. The principles of Restorative Justice are also applied where possible. Students are encouraged to speak to their Tutor or Year Head if they wish to raise a concern about a behavioural matter.
- (g) School rules and the reason for them are discussed as part of the school's pastoral care programme or as part of SPHE. The notion of tolerance for others, self – control, a sense of fairness and the principles of natural justice are also discussed as part of the Religious Education programme in the school
- (h) Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Sexism, Harassment, Violence, Substance Misuse are discussed with the students during their time in our school, using current legislation,

current affairs and outside speakers. This is to help the students better understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding and action on factual information and in the line with the values espoused in our school.

- (i) The school's Anti-Bullying policy, which will be published on the school website and of which a summarised version is published in the Student Journal, sets out the actions taken in relation to alleged breaches of the policy.

Students with Additional Educational Needs:

- Subject teachers, resource teachers and special needs assistants should check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that students with special educational needs can understand. This understanding needs to be checked from time to time especially where a student with special needs is acting in a way that would usually be seen as being in breach of the rules. Teachers may need support in understanding how best to help a student with special educational needs to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school.

Rewards

In our school, teachers use the following methods to reward students for upholding the code of behaviour:

- Verbal praise of student by teacher privately
- Positive note recorded in the student journal
- Positive behaviour comments on VsWare
- Positive comment regarding the student to tutor or Year head
- Verbal praise of student at assembly
- Positive reinforcement letter from Board of Management
- Rewards trip at end of school year
- Leadership roles given to students as Prefects and as Student Council members.
- Class trips related to the curriculum
- Brief, positive note or phone call to parents
- Highlight curricular/extra-curricular achievements on notice boards in classrooms and corridors
- Display of student's work around the school
- Highlight curricular/extra-curricular achievements on school website, school newsletter or in local newspaper

Students with Additional Educational Needs:

- Rewards for students with special educational needs should take account of their learning styles. For all students and especially those with learning difficulties, a reward will have an impact when it is intricately linked in time to the behaviour that is being rewarded.

Strategies and Sanctions

The purpose of these strategies and sanctions is to bring about a change in behaviour. They help students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable and to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

The following strategies and sanctions are used so that our students understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.

They are scaled to take account of the nature of the incident, the situation leading up to the incident and are implemented by the staff of the school in accordance with our system of referral.

- A reminder or caution to the student
- Interview or talk with the student outlining the expected behaviour
- Alter the seating arrangement or move the student seat
- Carrying out a useful task in school
- Extra appropriate work assignment
- Student to present to the teacher before school or at break with the work complete and/or an apology
- Note in Student Journal/VsWare
- A fine to cover the cost of repair or replacement
- Removal of privilege
- Consultation with Class Tutor
- Telephone call to parents
- Removal of student from scene of incident while still under supervision

Strategies and sanctions for more serious incidents or for consistent breaches of our code of behaviour include the following. These may be applied but not necessarily in the order listed.

- Giving the student a piece of written work to do in which they have to outline in writing the rule/rules they breached, the effects this breach had on themselves and on other members of the school community and how they can avoid a repeat of this behaviour.
- Withdrawal from class
- Lunchtime detention
- After school detention
- Weekly report
- Behaviour Contract between school, student and parent
- Refer student to Tutor/Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal/Guidance Counsellors
- Telephone call to parents
- Formal letter home

- Meeting with parents
- In house suspension
- Suspension from School (see CMETB Suspension and Expulsion policy)

Lunchtime detention or short detention is defined as a period of detention of about 30 mins duration during lunchtime.

After School Detention is defined as a period of detention of 60 mins duration after school on a day assigned by the Year Head.

Referrals

The basic principle of referral system is that the higher up the ladder an incident is dealt with, the more serious it is viewed. The ladder of referral involves all staff in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour in a day-to-day and practical way. It gives an ownership of the policy to all staff and it is appropriate that they be involved as they operate it on an on-going basis.

If a student has a problem which is contributing to their inability to uphold the Code of Behaviour, then the following referrals may be made:

- Record on VsWare
- Referral to Year Head via VsWare
- Referral to Guidance Counsellor via the Guidance Referral Form
- Referral to Learning Support for testing and/or help in behaviour modification via the Learning Support Referral Form
- Referral to Deputy Principal
- Referral to Principal
- Referral to appropriate outside agency

Serious breaches may mean bypassing of certain steps if deemed appropriate by the Principal.

Step 1: The Subject Teacher

The subject teacher is the frontline source of help for students. As a leader of learning and someone with an established relationship of trust, the subject teacher will have a strong influence with students. Each teacher has the responsibility for managing behaviour in his/her own classroom and will deal with routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies.

The Class Tutor will also advise and guide the student to reflect on disruptive behaviour with a view to changing to more positive behaviours.

More serious offences should be dealt with under Step 2 of our referral system. The role and responsibilities of the Subject Teachers include the following:

- Promoting teaching and learning in a safe and caring environment.
- Giving regular assessments and monitoring progress
- Using the school journal and student database (VsWare) as a method of communication with home re: behaviour, work rate, homework, attendance etc.
- Keeping records of any incidents which may occur during class including the student database.
- Each student is equipped with a School Journal, which the Class Tutor signs at the end of each week and parents/guardians are requested to countersign.
- Assigning a behaviour to the relevant Year Head on VsWare in the event of ongoing problems having utilised and recorded classroom sanctions.
- Recording a class attendance for each class, each day on VS Ware.
- Completing progress and exam reports.
- Implementing school rules throughout the school.
- Contacting parents to discuss areas of concern in their subject area.

Step 2: The Year Head

Each Year Group is assigned a teacher with special responsibility for them. He/she has a pastoral and disciplinary role to play with the class groups that make up this year group. The role and responsibilities of the Year Head include the following:

- Dealing with VsWare behaviours assigned by subject teachers
- Contacting parents to discuss areas of concern
- Checking student journals/student database on a regular basis
- Ensuring that the student's discipline and academic records are kept up to date in the appropriate files.
- Will assign a student to after school detention and communicate the necessary documentation the parents.
- Issuing and monitoring of day and progress reports in conjunction with the class tutor
- Monitoring the uniform and hygiene of students and taking appropriate action to ensure everyone conforms to the appropriate dress code.
- Meeting with parents to discuss and resolve any problems or difficulties relating to students. (Parents must contact the school secretary to make an appointment to attend a meeting with the Year Head)
- Attending meetings with the Principal, Deputy Principal. These meetings will focus on different aspects of school life including discipline, behaviour, student problems etc. A range of sanctions/recommendations may be decided at this meeting.
- In the event of a serious breach of the College Code of Behaviour, the Year Head will be a Key Investigator collating the necessary files in relation to the incident. In the event, that the Year Head is not able to investigate this incident an alternative member of staff will be nominated to carry out this role.
- To refer students to the Discipline Committee after a serious breach of school Code of Behaviour or when VsWare points threshold has been reached.

Step 3: The Deputy Principals or Principal

Students whose behaviour has not been modified despite the school's best efforts will be referred by the Year Head to the Deputy Principals / Principal. If the Deputy Principals or Principal decide that a suspension is warranted the procedures in our policy on suspension and expulsion will be followed.

Student files are kept in the main office. Contracts and weekly reports are filed, as are copies of letters sent home and contents of telephone conversations and meetings with parents relating to sanctions and interventions.

Serious Incident Procedures

In the event of an isolated event(s) that are deemed as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour then they will be subject to be recorded as a Serious Incident and the following procedures will apply.

Step One – Key Investigator

- When a serious incident occurs the Year Head or in their absence another Year Head/Deputy Principal will lead the investigation. They will be referred as the 'Key Investigator (KI)'.
 - The Key Investigator (KI) will reflect the year group that they are responsible for:
 - Year Head/Assistant Year Head
 - It is the responsibility of KI to coordinate the full investigation.
 - Electronic Triage Reporting Form completed in full.
 - When a serious incident has been reported they must immediately notify the Deputy Principal or Principal.
 - If the serious incident is a child protection concern, then this matter must be immediately reported to the Designated Liaison Officer – the school principal.
 - In his absence, the deputy designated liaison officer should be notified.
 - Where the DLP or DDLP deems that events surrounding this incident are a child protection concern then a referral will be made to TUSLA to this effect.
 - The KI when in receipt of the established facts will without delay notify the respective families of their child's involvement in a serious incident.

Step Two – Investigation

- If a member of staff witnesses a serious incident, then it is their obligation to report this matter in full to through the electronic portal accessible through the CBC School Plan OneNote Book; School Website, School App; Vsware.
- An alert email should be issued to the respective Year Head alerting them that a report has been made.
 - The staff member should ascertain what year group the student(s) are in and report this accordingly.
 - The staff member is also required to submit an eyewitness report to the events that they encountered.

- It is then the responsibility for the KI to coordinate the investigation fully.
- All students involved in the incident will be invited to submit their personal statement.
 - Personal statements can be submitted in written format or electronically (Please refer to report template guidelines).
 - The KI will contact all respective parties' families via phone or in the event they are unreachable via phone an email or text of the incident, the allegation and inviting a statement to be submitted.
 - Records of all efforts made to contact families will be recorded by the KI.
 - **It is the responsibility of the students with the support of their parent/guardian/family to furnish the KI the following day with their version of events.**
 - If a student declines or waves the right to submit their statement, this is recorded by the KI.
- If a student(s) has been injured or all parties involved have been injured, then they must report to the GP/Hospital of medical support.
 - It is expected that a cert would be received as acknowledgement that the Student has attend.
- Any student(s) directly involved in a serious incident must also be referred to the Student Support Team for further pastoral support.
- The KI will meet with the victims and accused and where possible in the presence of at least one other member of staff as directed by the KI
 - These meetings are to take place in the designated Offices of the respective Year Heads or the Board Room beside the Main Office. In the event unavailable other alternative venues should be explored:
 - DP Office/Principal Office
- The KI must inform the parents of all directly involved that their son/daughter has been involved in a serious incident which is currently being investigated. (Please refer to protocol for contacting parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Any eyewitnesses reported during this meeting should also be met by the KI and requested to submit their personal statements the following day. The KI may assign another member of staff to carry out this part of this investigation. All parents of key witnesses must be notified of a request for a statement.
- No statements will be accepted until parents/guardians have been informed and afforded the opportunity to discuss the matter with their son/daughter.
- All initial meetings should be
 - Undertaken without delay
 - The key facts recorded
 - Time/date and student name fully identified
- All reports collated should
 - Follow the prescribed format for submission. (Please see template)
 - All hard copy reports should be collated and submitted into the Deputy Principal

Step Three - Referral

- All reports should be referred to the Deputy Principal or in her absence the Principal.
- An email notifying the respective Year Head that an incident has occurred which is currently being investigated. (Please refer to email template)
- KI will notify DP when the full investigation is completed.

Expectations for Parents/Guardians

Registration and admission to Virginia College is conditional on parents'/guardians' giving a written undertaking that they find this Code of Behaviour acceptable and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their son/daughter.

Parents/ Guardians should:

- Provide the school with the necessary contact details where a responsible adult designated by the parent/guardian, may be contacted in case of illness or emergency.
- Inform the school of any changes of contact details such as postal address, email address or phone numbers.
- Inform the school of any trauma/difficulty, which may affect the child's performance or behaviour in school.
- Inform the school if their child is ill or absent for any reason. Explanation to be entered on VsWare app.
- Inform the Class Tutor/ Year Head if a student has to take prescribed medication during school hours. (Students are not allowed to give fellow students any form of medication).
- Explain the Code of Behaviour to their son/daughter.
- Support the discipline structures within the school to maintain a good learning environment for all.
- Ensure that their son/daughter complies with sanctions that may be imposed for breaches of school rules.
- Ensure that their child completes any homework given by subject teachers neatly and to an acceptable standard and complies with the homework policy.
- Ensure that their son/daughter takes home their school bag every day.
- Ensure that deadlines for coursework and project work are met and work is submitted.
- Check and sign school journals in preparation for journal check on Mondays on a regular basis for correspondence from teachers.
- Check students' results and encourage your son/daughter to achieve to their full potential.
- Contact the office and make an appointment if they wish to meet a member of the staff.
- Attend Parent/Teacher meetings as organised with their son/daughter.

Communication between school and home

- The school journal & VsWare app are the first line of contact between subject teachers and parents.

- Parents/Guardians are provided with access details for VS Ware where they can monitor attendance, progress and behaviour records.
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they are worried about any aspect of their child's progress in school.
- Constructive information regarding their child's progress and behaviour is made through progress reports and parent/teacher meetings.
- Parents/guardians are informed at an early stage, of any discipline problems that may arise with their child.
- Parents/guardians are informed about school activities by VsMail, text messages website, letter, Parents Association meetings etc.
- Awards, graduation, information meetings, class celebrations, open day/evening etc. are held where parents/guardians can attend.

Procedures in the event of consistent breaches of the Code of Conduct

1. A student may be referred to a member of the Student Support Team on the advice of the Class Tutor, Subject teacher or Year Head.
2. Detention, withdrawal of privileges from a student or withdrawal from class or Weekly Report or Contract may be used for specific breaches e.g. poor punctuality, homework not done or unsatisfactory behaviour.
3. If a student is late the following procedures will apply:

Late for Tutor Class

- **Step 1:** Teacher in Period 1 (Tutor class) permits the student into class
- **Step 2:** Teacher records student as 'Late' on VSWare Attendance register
- **Step 3:** Late text to issue from Office
- **Step 4:** Referral to Year Head

Late for Class

- **Step 1:** Class teachers permit the student into class
- **Step 2:** Class teacher records student as 'Late' on VSWare Attendance register
- **Step 3:** Class teacher monitors lates to class and adds note on VsWare behaviours as persistent lates to class when student has 3 consecutive lates and class sanction is applied.
- **Step 4:** Referral to Year Head

4. If a student isn't wearing the correct uniform, he/she should have a note of explanation, signed by a parent/guardian, in his/her school journal. If the correct uniform is not worn on three occasions without valid justification by the parent/guardian the student will receive an appropriate sanction and the parents will be informed. Jackets, coats and jumpers not conforming to the school uniform will be temporarily confiscated and placed Deputy Principals Offices near the staffroom.

Sanction:

- **1st Offence: Verbal Reprimand by Class tutor and record on VsWare behaviours**
- **2nd Offence: Lunch time detention**

- **3rd Offence: After School Detention**

5. **Mobile technology:** For health and safety reasons mobile phones are banned within the school grounds and buildings at all times.
 - The use of mobile phones, recording devices (audio or image), personal MP3/MP4 players, iPod, Smart watches or other electronic devices are not allowed in the school.
 - Taking photographs or images and or audio recording by students in the school is strictly prohibited. **All students are reminded that videoing/recording a member of the school community during school hours is strictly forbidden and are also reminded that sharing such content on social media or closed media groups bears its own legal repercussions.**
 - The State Examinations Commission does not allow mobile phones to be used as calculators or clocks during State examinations.
 - If a phone rings or is produced in a classroom or between classes, the phone will be confiscated by the teacher and will be left in the front office. The teacher records this on vsware behaviours and points are deducted from students. Mobile phones can only be collected by a parent/guardian immediately after school hours.
 - A student whose phone has been confiscated may use the school phone, if necessary.
 - A student who fails to hand over the mobile phone when in breach of this policy may be subject to suspension
 - Virginia College will not be held responsible for the loss or damage of any personal mobile technology that has been confiscated.
 - Neither will the school undertake an investigation should a loss or thefts occur.
6. There may be cases of indiscipline that will require the Principal to act independently of the above procedures in order to maintain the safety of a student or staff.
7. The respective Year Head in consultation with the Senior Management Team will make the final decision if the school is confident enough about the standard of behaviour of a student to take him/her on a school tour, especially an overnight tour.
8. The Principal has the authority to suspend a student for up to three days if this is deemed necessary. This may be extended to five days in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Procedures for suspension are set out in the attached CMETB Suspension and Expulsions Policy and Procedures.
9. In the case of a student who continues to misbehave, the student's case may be referred to the Board of Management of Virginia College.
10. The Board of Management may advise the permanent exclusion of a student following the procedures laid out in the attached CMETB Suspension and Expulsions Policy and Procedures
11. All incidents of indiscipline are recorded electronically in the School's Discipline System in VsWare.
12. The school reserves the right to withdraw a student from an extra-curricular activity or from any other privilege of the school's choice if the said student is in breach of school rules or regulations.

Student Management Information System

Virginia College uses VShare for our Student Management Information System (SMIS). It is an excellent service for our parents/guardians. All parents have been provided with a unique username/login and password which can be used to access VShare.

Parents/Guardians can see the following information in relation to their children on VShare 24/7

- Reports (current and historic)
- Attendance (Daily & by class subject)
- Timetable
- Behaviour
- List of Classes & Teachers

Graded System for Minor Incidents

3 Incidents (VShare)



Sanction

3 Sanctions (VShare)



Lunchtime Detention

3 Lunchtime Detentions



After School Detention

3 After School Detentions



Suspension

Non-attendance at Lunchtime Detention



After School Detention

Non-attendance at After School Detention



2 After School Detentions

Detention Procedure

- Detention will take place from 1:22 p.m. to 1:52 p.m. every Tuesday (Lunch time) and 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. every Thursday (After School Detention) subject to change.
- A student who is late or skips detention will be assigned a detention in addition to the one that was missed.
- Any student who causes a disturbance during detention will be removed from the detention room and the detention will be reassigned.
- Students will not be allowed to eat in the detention room and delivery of food to the detention room is not allowed.
- Students will not be allowed to leave the detention room once detention has begun.
- Attendance at detentions will be recorded on VSWare behaviours.
- **If a student is assigned a detention, it will take precedence over all other school organised activities.**
- Subject teachers can assign their own lunch time detention. Subject teachers record attendance on VsWare behaviours.
- Year Heads will assign after school detention. This will include a letter been sent home.

Every student begins the year on 100 VSware points.

- Points are deducted for minor indiscretions which parents can view on VsWare
- If a student reaches 85 points, they will be placed on Day Report by the relevant Year Head which parents sign every evening
- If a student reaches 75 points they meet with a member(s) of the Student Support Team, a phone call home is made by the Year Head
- If a student reaches 70 points, more serious sanctions may be considered. Parents will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the student's behaviour and how it could be improved. Parents and students will be asked to sign a contract of acceptable behaviour.
- A student on less than 70 points may be suspended
- Students can gain/redeem points in a variety of ways e.g. recognition for work, participation in activities, improved performance in class/tests, commendations by teachers etc.

Positive Reward System

- Students retaining 100 points at the end of the school year benefit from a Rewards trip
- Students can gain additional points for positive behaviours e.g. Excellence in Class, Contribution to the school and community, merit awards from teachers.
- If a student reaches 130 points, the Year Head recognises the achievement during Assembly.
- If a student reaches 150 points, the student receives a lunch voucher for the canteen.
- If a student reaches 170 points, the student receives a letter of recognition from the Board of Management.
- The cumulative total of points in different positive behaviours recorded on VsWare form the basis for celebration of students during end of Year Awards.

Implementation

All registered students of the school have a summarised version of the Code of Behaviour in their School Journal. The Code will be published in its entirety on the school website and is also available from the school upon request. All staff have a copy of the code in their Teachers' Handbook.

At the beginning of each year each class is brought through the Code of Behaviour. This is done to give students the opportunity to think and talk about behaviour, learning and rules so that they can understand what the Code of Behaviour means for them. At the beginning of the school year teachers are also brought through the main aspects of the implementation of the code. This is done to promote consistency of practice.

This Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the parents, students, staff and management of Virginia College. The code is monitored on a regular basis. Aspects of the code are discussed formally at Year Head, Staff, Department and Committee meetings. Teachers are encouraged to communicate concerns and suggestions to the pastoral team.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Virginia College at the meeting of the Board on 22nd June 2023

Signed: Madalaine Grogan
Chairperson

Date: 22/06/2023

Signed: Neil Lyell
Principal

Date: 22/6/23

