



Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy

April 2024

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The aim of St Mary's Secondary School is to provide holistic education, in the Catholic tradition, for all our students. We are committed to the academic, creative, emotional, spiritual and physical development of each student, in a caring and safe environment'.

In keeping with the spirit of our Mission Statement, we have a caring and positive attitude to discipline. Disciplinary decisions are taken in a spirit of concern for all members of the school community.

All members of the school community have a right to enjoy and benefit from school in a secure environment conducive to learning and personal development. This right brings with it certain duties or requirements of students and they are:

1. RESPECT FOR SELF

This includes:

- Being responsible, honest, courteous and punctual
- Giving reasonable attention to personal hygiene, neatness and uniform. The judgement of the appropriate authorities in such matters must be accepted by all students.
- Students must take due care of their personal property as the school does not accept responsibility for loss of same.

2. RESPECT FOR OTHERS

This includes:

- Being co-operative, polite and friendly towards students, staff and visitors. ● Being respectful to staff inside and outside of school. Students are reminded to respect the privacy of all staff.
- Recognizing the right of others to feel safe and secure in an orderly environment. Behaviour which causes disruption in class can adversely affect the prospects of others and is a serious offence.
- Bullying, intimidation, horseplay, running in corridors, etc. theft and deliberate damage to other people's personal property, are all unacceptable.
- Threatening and /or dangerous behaviour towards any member of the school community will not be tolerated. Physical fighting, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, pulling, pushing, wrestling in school is unacceptable as it poses a risk to all students involved. Pretend fighting or physical 'messing' can also pose a serious risk to the safety of others, albeit unintentional, and for that reason is also unacceptable.

3. RESPECT FOR ST MARY'S

Respect for St. Mary's which has a proud tradition extending back over 170 years includes

- Behaving in a responsible manner while wearing the school uniform inside and outside of the school.
- Students are expected to behave in a manner which reflects positively on themselves and their school when participating in or attending school related events outside of school.
- Smoking, vaping, possession or use of alcohol or illicit drugs on the school premises (which includes the buildings, yards, playing fields & walkways leading up to school), surrounding environment or on school related activities is strictly forbidden. Students who choose to remain in the company of other students who are smoking/vaping/alcohol/ drugs may also be subject to sanction. Interference with alarms, fire equipment and emergency exits is also prohibited. The latter are deemed an extremely serious offence.
- Theft, deliberate damage to furniture, fittings or buildings or defacement by graffiti are forbidden.
- Students will be required to make good any damage caused to school property by neglect or misbehaviour.
- **Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Scheme:** Books & Materials will remain property of the school and be on loan to students. Students are required to keep all loaned items in excellent condition. Students may not tear pages or otherwise deface books in any way. Damaged or lost items will need to be replaced by parents/guardians. As books are school property they can be repossessed at any time and must be returned if the student leaves the school or at the end of Junior Cycle.
- Chewing gum is strictly forbidden.

4. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- (a) All students must be present in the school during official school hours. Students must attend all classes for which they are timetabled. Failure to do so will result in a probation II due to health and safety.
- (b) A student who becomes ill at school should report to **Year Head**, otherwise being out of class on the excuse of illness will not be accepted. Parents may only be contacted **by the school** in the event of illness.
A student's use of a mobile phone to contact home is deemed an offence. The phone will be confiscated as per school rules.
- (c) In accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, a parent shall notify the Principal/ Year Head of the reasons for her/his daughter's absence from school for a school day or part of a school day, by:

(i) Contacting the Year Head (by phone or email) or by requesting the absence on VSWare. Either need to be done before 10am in the morning of the student's absence.

And

(ii) Recording a note In the "Explanations for Absence" section of the student journal, **if** you did not place the absence on VSWare. This must be presented tutors

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before the student rejoins class on the day of her return to school.

We request parents/guardians to keep the school informed of any changes to contact details, phone or email addresses.

- (d) Students are not allowed to leave the school premises during school hours without permission from the **Year Head (if unavailable, the Principal or Deputy Principal)**. To do so is a very serious offence. A parent cannot sign a student out without year head permission. Failure to inform the year head will result in the student being placed on Probation 1 Red Card.
- (e) Parents/guardians are requested to make medical, dental or other such appointments outside of class time. In exceptional circumstances when a student has to leave the school premises during school time on a particular day:
- Place the permission to leave up on VSWare before 9am on the day of the appointment or an explanatory note from parent/guardian must be written in the "Permission to leave school" section of the Journal and presented to the Year Head, on the morning of the appointment. Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) are also asked to collect their daughter at the school office and sign the students out at reception. Students should come to reception at the departure time. Students will not be called over the intercom as this disturbs teaching and learning.
 - In the event of a parent being unable to collect their daughter/senior student it is essential that the parent/guardian contacts the year head by phone or email and that it is also placed on VSWare. A senior cycle student will not be allowed leave the school without the above procedures being adhered to..
 - A junior cycle student will not be allowed to leave the premises unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. In the event that a parent/guardian wishes their daughter to leave with another parent/ guardian, the student must bring a note to their Year Head on the morning of their departure explaining such. The parent must contact the Year Head to explain.
 - In the unlikely event that a parent needs to collect her daughter unexpectedly, the student still requires permission from the Year Head. The student needs to prepare a note in her journal for the Year Head, signed by the parent, before taking it to the Year Head for signature and approval.
- (f) It is **an extremely serious offence** if a student is absent from school without the knowledge of her parents/guardian.
- (g) Students may not be absent from school for the purpose of holidays. (h) The school authorities are legally obliged to report a student to the National Education Welfare Board if she is absent from school for 20 days or more.
- NOTE: Two half days count as one day.**

5. PUNCTUALITY

Student's punctuality is monitored regularly by Year Heads and Tutors. • Students are required to be on time for all classes. The current teaching hours are from 9.00am to 3.55pm Monday and Tuesday; 9.00am to 3.15pm Wednesday to Friday. Supervision of students extends for 10 minutes before classes commence and for 10 minutes after classes end except in the case of school sponsored activities or courses.

- A signed explanatory note in the student journal from a parent/guardian is required if a student is late for school. The absence of such a note/contact from home may

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result in a student being placed on detention at break or lunch time.

- A student who is late for school is required to enter by the **main entrance door** and to sign the "late book" at reception. Late will be recorded as such on VSWARE profile. **This late book must be co-signed by a parent/guardian** who signs in the student. Lateness will result in punctuality detention. An accumulation of punctuality detention will result in loss of lunchtime privileges and/ or being placed on Probation I/II. Parents must be aware of the cumulative effect of lateness adding to more time lost in class.
- Senior students in the event of being late for school after lunch may lose their lunchtime privilege of going downtown for a period of time decided by school management. Students must be signed in by parent/guardian.

6. SCHOOL UNIFORM

Full regular uniform must be worn at all times unless otherwise designated by Management. The uniform must be kept clean and presentable. Students are required to change back into uniform after PE classes, matches and other activities that require sports attire.

- Full uniform consists of:

Blouse: St Mary's - Blue and white striped. Must be worn (visible) everyday.

Skirt: St Mary's - Navy – 3 Pleated- **knee length. Skirt is not to be rolled up.**

Trousers: Nominated "Hunter" brand school trousers only.

Tights: Navy tights/socks. Black Leggings/tights are not acceptable

Jumper: Navy school jumper with sky blue line on neckline and embedded crest.

Shoes: Navy / black (not brown) suitable for school, keeping in mind the importance of a young person's posture and safety. Pumps, canvas type shoes and black runners are not acceptable. NIKE CONVERSE ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE FOOTWEAR. Runners are required for PE **only** (non-mark soles) and are not to be regarded as shoes for school. Dubarry Decks Clarks and Ecco are examples of school shoes

Scarf: A navy scarf is permitted, as deemed suitable by management.

Jacket: Navy school jacket with crest only.

Please ensure the students name is clearly marked on the name tags provided on the jacket and initialed as advised. Student property is entirely the student's full responsibility.

- A minimum of jewellery (watch, 2 rings, 1 bracelet, 1 simple **gold/silver chain** and a max. of 2 small ear studs/sleepers/Huggies in **ear lobe only**) is allowed. **Other piercings e.g. nose, upper ear, eyebrow etc.**, is totally unacceptable and in breach of school policy. Students may be asked to remove these immediately and these will be confiscated. Confiscated items will be retained until the end of the school year and the student will incur a sanction, for example will be placed on

detention for first offence.

- Fashion accessories, make-up, fake tan, false/tinted eyebrows and false eyelashes are not allowed.
 - Nails should be short neat, clean well kept and **appropriate** to the teaching and learning environment of the classroom as deemed by management. Any type of nail that poses a health and safety risk will need to be removed immediately. Failure to do so will result in probation I and probation II and then suspension.
 - Eyebrows should be make-up free and appropriate as deemed by management.
 - Hair is expected to be clean, of a natural hair colour, neat discreetly styled and out of students eyes, in keeping with the general appearance of the school uniform, as deemed appropriate by management. Hair accessories should be plain and simple, 5
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- as deemed appropriate by management.
- In the event of incorrect uniform, (including make-up, accessories etc) a student may be placed on detention during lunchtime or her lunch time privilege may be withdrawn for a given period decided by Management.
 - Further breaches of this rule may result in the issuing of probation cards or further sanctions as outlined in sanctions section of this journal.
 - Uniform must be worn with COVID-19 protocols and students must adhere to COVID Guidelines.
 - Uniform is to be worn during state exams and on school trips where appropriate.

7. STUDENT JOURNAL:

- Students are required to have their student's journal in their possession while in class every day.
- The journal used must be the official St. Mary's Secondary School journal. ● The journal is not a private diary and must be used for **school purposes only**, particularly the noting of exercises and assignments and the noting of correspondence between teachers and parents/ guardians and vice versa. ● Teachers have the right to inspect a journal, to write on it, or to request a comment or signature from a parent/guardian.
- Parents/guardians are requested to **sign the journal every week**.
- Students are required to keep the journal in excellent condition.
- Students may not tear pages from the journal or otherwise deface it in any way.
- Students should refer to the resources in the journal ie literacy, numeracy, and assessment guidelines.

8. MOBILE PHONES/SMART DEVICES:

- The use of smart recording devices such as cameras, and other video making equipment is not permitted on the school premises, (i.e. school buildings and adjoining land).
- Sanctions shall include confiscation for a given period of time and shall only be recovered by a parent calling to the school after the expiry of that period. ● Further breaches of this rule may result in longer periods of confiscation. ● The use of equipment such as cameras, camera phones, any recording devices will be deemed a serious offence and may incur suspension.
- All communication must be through the school office. It is an offence to contact parents using mobile phones. Mobile phones will be confiscated in this case. ● **School devices can only be used for classwork. School email can only be used for classwork. Sanctions may apply (including but not limited to Google Account Suspension).**

9. LOCKERS

- Lockers which are the property of St Mary's, may be assigned to students for their personal use on a yearly basis at an annual cost communicated to students in early September. Students can pay for one locker, but it must remain locked with the lock sold by the school.
- PE training bags must be placed in the storage in the gym.
- Students must keep their lockers tidy, in good order, free from graffiti and must keep them locked. Unlocked lockers will be emptied.
- Teachers may inspect lockers from time to time, and may at any time ask a student to open her locker for inspection.

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- A student is in serious breach of the rules if she has unauthorised or banned substances, materials, utensils, tools or weapons in her locker. The privilege of having a locker may be revoked at any time for breach of these rules.
- The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to a student's property.
- Any unemptied lockers will be opened for cleaning in June.

10. FORBIDDEN SUBSTANCES

- The possession, use or consumption of tobacco, alcohol, e-cigarettes, or any banned substance is prohibited on the school premises or grounds, or at any school outing or event.
- The presentation of a student on the school premises or grounds or if the student is in school uniform or at any school outing or event in an intoxicated state or having consumed an intoxicating or banned substance is strictly forbidden and an extremely serious breach of school rules.
- The possession or taking of prescribed drugs is strictly forbidden unless the student bears a note from her parents/guardians which has been authenticated by the Principal, Deputy Principal or other authorised teacher.
- Medication can only be administered by a parent/guardian.

11. STUDENT CARS

- Use of cars by students during the school day is not allowed i.e. 9.00am-3.55pm. Monday & Tuesday and between 9.00am – 3.15pm Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
- In the event of a student using her car during this time it will be deemed as a serious offence as will any student who chooses to be a passenger.

12. SCHOOL OUTINGS, FIELD TRIPS, WORK EXPERIENCE, ETC.

• Educational outings, to exhibitions, museums, factories etc and work experience, are part of our curriculum. Students must attend and in uniform where deemed necessary by management.

- In cases where the school trip is part of the assessment, absent students will still have to complete this task in their own time.

13. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR

- Students are expected to contribute positively to the learning environment of a classroom and to obey all classroom rules.
- Students must request permission to speak, and must listen clearly to others as appropriate.
- Students are expected to apply themselves appropriately to their studies and work. Homework is to be done properly and on time. In the event of matches etc. students should make every effort to complete homework for the next class.
- Regard must be given to learning and teaching time missed through illness/extracurricular or school activities. Students are responsible for catching up by giving their school journal to a homework buddy and/or making contact with classmates for classwork/homework missed.
- An explanatory note on the journal from a parent/guardian is required in the event of a student's failure to complete homework.
- Students are required to bring all required texts and equipment to class. 7

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- Students must line up outside the classroom quietly and wait for their teacher to arrive.
- Once set, base classes cannot be changed. Option classes can only be changed by going through a change of mind process.
- Online classes are adhered to as set out in the school's Acceptable Usage Policy.

14. BULLYING

- The school has a strict Anti Bullying Policy.
- Bullying is repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. When the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is considered to be bullying.
- In keeping with our Code of Behaviour and Discipline, it is vital that students understand that all forms of maltreatment of others are unacceptable and a breach of our code of conduct.

15. HOUSE EXAMS

- The school will not accommodate students who are absent for house exams for any reason. Students are required to produce a doctor certificate in the case of absence for illness.
- The school cannot take requests for alterations to the house exam timetable to accommodate holidays, medical appointments or any other absences. The school calendar will be available on the school website and student journal.
- Copies of exams may be collected for completion at home after the exam has concluded. However, in order to uphold the integrity of the exams, results will not be recorded officially on the schools database.
- Students must follow House Exam Rules as directed by the Year Head at assembly.
- No phones/ smart watches / Apple watches/ inappropriate use of devices during exams.

16. SANCTIONS FOR BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT • Students are required to respect the rights of others, to treat each member of the school community with respect, to adhere to our schools code of conduct and to obey all

rules.

- In the interest of good order, to protect the rights of all who use our school and to achieve our overall objectives, breaches of the code of conduct may incur sanctions and penalties.
- Students and parents need to be aware that high standards of behaviour and co-operation are expected and disciplinary measures are used in a positive fashion to maintain these standards.
- In all disciplinary matters, teachers will inform students of the specific breaches of the code of conduct that have been noted and will give students an opportunity to respond to the charges against them.
- Teachers will warn students appropriately of the consequences of their misbehaviour.
- Students will be sanctioned severely for breach of COVID-19 protocols.

17. SANCTIONS FOR MINOR BREACHES

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Class teachers will deal appropriately with all matters relating to minor breaches of the code of conduct and may inform the Class Tutor where applicable. Some possible sanctions may include:

- The use of a student record card.
- The issuing of a reprimand or warning.
- The requesting of a verbal or/and written apology.
- The assignment of punishment exercise.
- The noting of the misdemeanour in the journal for parent/guardian

signature.

- The assigning of extra homework.
- Detention at break or lunch time. ● Students may be withdrawn from their own class and placed in the special care of another teacher.
- Confiscation of equipment/property.
- Removal of lunch time privilege

A full apology, not partial/qualified, must be given in the case of any misbehaviour. In some cases of student misbehaviour, management shall interview students as part of all investigations. The Class Tutor and/or Year Head may request the counsellor to intervene in an effort to help the student overcome behavioural or personal problems.

18. MORE SERIOUS BREACHES

- Where a problem persists or is of a more serious nature the teacher makes a report to the Tutor and Year Head who may issue Report Card 1/Probation 1. When On Report the student will be required to present her Probation Card to each class teacher and to her year head as required. The probation card will also require the signature of a parent/guardian each day. The period of Probation is at the discretion of the Year Head but normally a minimum of one week
- If Probation 1 stage is not satisfactory or the initial problem is serious, the Year Head in consultation with the Class Tutor and/or Deputy Principal may issue Probation 2 and the parents are contacted directly by the school. At this stage the Parents /Guardians

and the student may be asked to meet member/members of staff with a view to resolving the matter, and to helping the student improve her behaviour.

At this stage in an attempt to positively impact behaviour further pastoral interventions may be put in place – e.g. a teacher/tutor may be assigned to mentor the student. The student would then be responsible for meeting the teacher/tutor every morning and sometimes every evening to reinforce positive behaviour and evaluate progress.

During this stage the student would also be encouraged to visit the guidance counsellor on a weekly basis.

The Year Head/ Deputy Principal monitors progress on a weekly basis.

19. SUSPENSION

- If probation 2 is unsatisfactory or the initial problem very serious the Principal or Deputy may suspend a student from school.

Grounds for suspension may include - (to mention a few examples)

- Threat to safety

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- Assault (as discussed in Section 2)
- The use or threat of violence
- Truancy
- Other Interventions exhausted
- Detrimental effect on other students
- Theft
- Single incident of serious misconduct
- Social Media issues

Investigations are undertaken by class tutor/ year head and or Deputy Principal and the student/students concerned are given an opportunity to respond to any allegations posed. When suspension is considered, parents/Guardians will be informed of the student's misdemeanour and asked to attend a meeting with the Principal and or Dep Principal/Year Head as soon as possible.. The parents and student will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the charges against the student before a decision is made on suspension.

In the event of suspension a letter of suspension will be issued to the Parents/Guardians of the student detailing:

- The length of suspension,
- Reason for suspension,
- Their right to appeal this decision to the Board of Management,
- General study to be done while on suspension and
- Date and time of next meeting with parents and student to re-instate the student. ●

Certain conditions may be imposed on a student before she will be accepted back to St Mary's after a suspension.

Such conditions may include:

- A meeting of the student with parents/guardian and Principal and/or members of staff.
- A written apology.
- A written undertaking of good and appropriate behaviour.
- The completion of assignments.

→ Work with pastoral care team and/or career guidance counsellor.

Parents/Guardians may appeal a suspension to the Board of Management.

- The process of such an appeal does not confer on the student the right to return to class until the appeal has been heard or the suspension has been served.
- The Board will hear the appeal and will decide to either uphold the appeal or to approve the suspension.
- In the event of a successful appeal against a suspension by parents, the Board will delete any reference to the suspension from the students file and may impose another sanction on the student instead of suspension, or may decide to impose no further sanction on the student.
- In the case of a six day suspension of a student, or an accumulation of twenty days or suspensions in a school year, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

20. EXPULSION

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- In cases of the most serious misdemeanours or following the unsuccessful application of interventions and sanctions the Board of Management may expel a student from the school.
- Expulsion will be sanctioned only following the most rigorous examination by the Board of Management of the circumstances of the case and will be exercised in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice and in conformity with the relevant legislation and the Code of Behaviour of St Mary's.
- Before the Board of Management will consider and make a final decision on a case that may incur a penalty of expulsion, parents/guardians will be informed of the details of the case and the seriousness of the situation and will be invited to make a submission to the Board of Management and or to meet the Board of Management to hear the charges against their child and to present their response.
- In the case of the expulsion of the student, the students' parents/guardians will have the right to appeal the decision of the Board of Management to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. Such an appeal should be made within 42 days of the expulsion order having been made.
- In the case of expulsion of a student, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

In Case of Illness

Parents are contacted when a student is ill. There may be occasions during school hours when, in the event of an incident or sudden illness, it may be necessary for us to take your daughter urgently to a doctor or to hospital without delay. It is important that we have your prior permission to do this while we continue to try to contact you. To give us that consent, please sign in the space provided below. The school will continue to attempt to contact you until successful.

I (Your signature)

GIVE PERMISSION TO THE SCHOOL AUTHORITIES OF ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL TO TAKE MY DAUGHTER

(Her name)

TO A DOCTOR OR TO HOSPITAL FOR ANY NECESSARY TREATMENT IN AN EMERGENCY.

It is very important that we have a record in the relevant section of your daughter's Green Folder of any illness or condition which may lead to her collapse or sudden onset of illness. We need to know what the problem is so that we can take appropriate action while awaiting medical assistance and contacting you. We understand the need for confidentiality.

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Lunch Pass

1. Senior Students Only (TY, Fifth Year and Leaving Certs) may leave the school premises at lunchtime with their parent's permission when deemed safe to do so.

TY Wednesday & Thursday Only

5th Yr Tuesday & Wednesday Only

6th Yr Monday & Friday Only

Junior students (1st, 2nd and 3rdYears) may not leave the school at lunchtime. In the event that your daughter abuses this privilege, it may be withdrawn at the schools discretion.

I give my daughter permission to leave the school premises at lunchtime. **Signature**

of parent/Guardian: _____

Permissions

1. I give permission for St. Mary's Secondary School to use photographs of my daughter for educational and promotional purposes in any type of media including its website.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

2. I give my daughter permission to leave the school accompanied by a teacher for matches, exhibitions, mass, field trips, PE classes, as appropriate.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

3. I give my daughter permission to attend Relationships and Sexuality Education Classes. Further information for parents can be found at
<https://ncca.ie/media/6335/jc-sphe-information-for-parents-en.pdf>

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

4. I give my daughter permission to have a school email.

Signature of parent/Guardian: _____ 4

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**St Mary's Secondary School
Code of Behaviour Parental and Student Acknowledgement Sheet**

Year of Enrolment: 2024- 2025

Student Name: _____

"I have read and understood St Mary's Code of Behaviour and discussed the school's expectations for student conduct with my daughter. I agree that she will abide by the school's Code of Behaviour for students for the duration of her enrolment in the school and that she will be supported in this by her parents."

Parental Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

“I _____ agree that I will abide by the school’s Code of Behaviour for the duration of my enrolment in the school.”

Student Signature: _____ Date:

Signatures are required to secure a place for the current academic year.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL UPON COMPLETION

Ratified by board 30-5-24