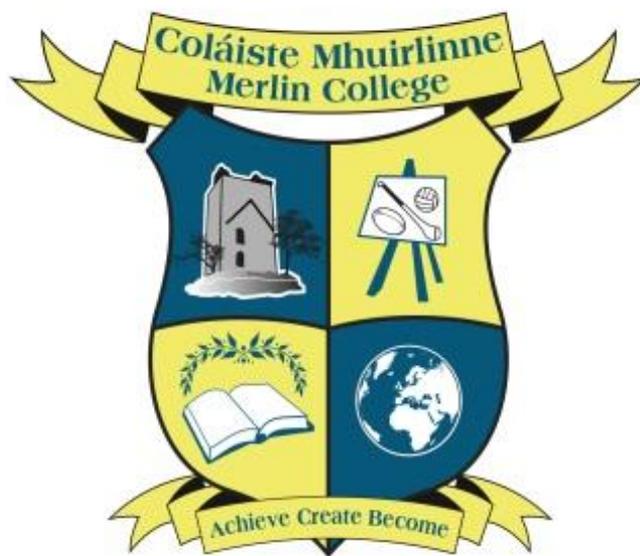


Suspension Policy.

Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College

Doughiska,

Galway City.



**Ratified by the Board of
Management on 7th May,
2014**



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Introduction

Coláiste Mhuirlinne/Merlin College

Mission Statement:

Our aim is to foster an environment of respect, integrity and positive learning in a safe and enjoyable setting.

The school sets out to create a happy, caring and secure environment in which the individual student

At their first Board of Management meeting the Board of Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College formally delegated the authority to suspend to the Principal.

This policy and its procedures are approved by the Board of Management having been developed in consultation with all the educational partners i.e. parents, students, staff. The policy has been developed in line with the NEWB Guidelines.

What does suspension mean in Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College?

“Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/ herself from the school for a specified period of school days.”

The grounds for suspension:

In Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College we recognise suspension as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Normally a range of other interventions will have been tried before a decision to suspend is made.

A decision to suspend requires serious grounds such as

- The student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Any serious incident of misconduct.

The reasons for suspension in Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College are clearly defined.

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student. A suspension will give the student time to reflect on the link between their actions and its consequences. A period of suspension will also give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour. Therefore, in



Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College, suspension may form part of a Behaviour Management Plan, thus enabling the school to set goals with the student and their parents, allow staff an opportunity to plan other interventions and to impress on the student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Forms of Suspensions in Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College.

Suspensions can be in one of two forms, namely

- (1) a suspension which is imposed as an ultimate sanction after a series of interventions involving student, parents, and staff.
- (2) an immediate suspension as a result of a serious misbehaviour.

Procedures in Respect of Suspension.

(1) **Immediate suspension:** A preliminary investigation must be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. Having due regard for our duty of care, once parents have been notified the student may be sent home from school.

Suspension can only take place after consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal with responsibility for the specific year group

Parents must be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension and the period of the suspension. Parents in the suspension letter are informed of their right to appeal the suspension and the procedures to be followed in respect of making that appeal.

(2) While it is possible for the Principal or his/her representative to suspend immediately in some exceptional cases, normally suspension will be linked to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. Copies of the Positive Behaviour Policy were given to, explained and signed by each student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) on enrolment.

Suspension normally occurs only after (a) all disciplinary options under the Positive Behaviour Policy have been applied and documented and (b) when all appropriate support services within the school have been either offered or involved. (c) When discussion with the parent(s)/guardian(s) relating to specific misbehaviours has taken place.

The following procedures will be followed.

Suspension will take place after consultation with and under the authority of the Principal, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal with responsibility for the specific year group.

Parents must be informed in writing of the reason for the suspension and the length of suspension must be made clear. Parents will be made aware of their right to appeal the suspension.

A record of all actions taken and correspondence must be kept.



Immediate Suspension: A student may be suspended immediately in some circumstances: fighting or aggressive behaviour or threatening physical or verbal behaviour towards any member of staff. Fighting between students where students have been blatantly struck forcefully or attacked will result in an immediate suspension. Unwarranted touching of a sexual nature/ sexual assault will also require suspension while relevant partners are notified.

Reasons for the suspension of a pupil must be linked with the Positive Behaviour Policy, of which the student and Parents/Guardian must have copies, be familiar with its contents, and preferably have signed that they have read and understood the Code.

In accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board, a student will not normally be suspended for poor academic performance, poor attendance or lateness and minor breaches of the Positive Behaviour Policy.

The period of suspension: A student may be suspended from school for a period of one day, two days or three days depending on the severity of the misbehaviour.

In exceptional circumstances the Principal may choose to extend the period of suspension to five days with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The Board of Management shall place a ceiling of fifteen days (as specified by the NEWB) on any one period of suspension imposed. The Board of Management shall formally review any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year to twenty days or more.

If a student during the course of any one academic year reaches an accumulated total of six days suspension the Principal will notify the Education and Welfare officer of this in writing.

After the suspension ends: A period of suspension ends on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. The student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start and the same standard of behaviour will be expected from the returning student as all the others. Support should be offered to the student in the re-integration process.

Review of suspension policy. To ensure that the Suspensions Policy in Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College is consistent with other school policies, natural justice and changes in education, this policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal a decision to suspend to the Board of Management of Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College.