



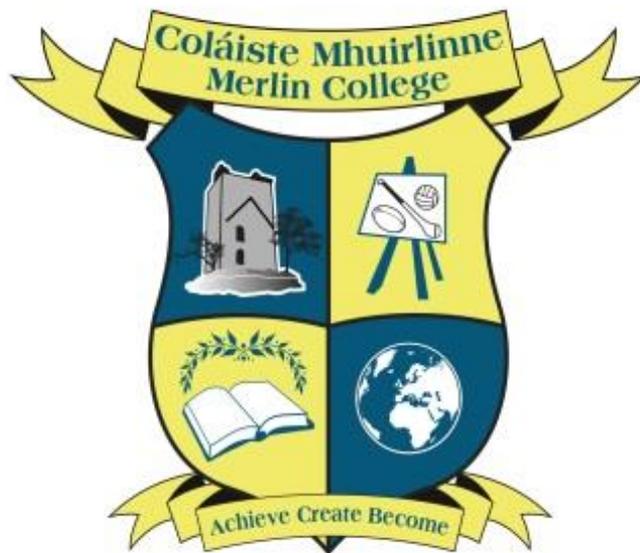
Coláiste Mhuirlinne/
Merlin College

Code of Positive Behaviour Policy.

Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College

Doughiska,

Galway City.



**Reviewed and amended by
the Board of Management
on 3rd March, 2016**



Code of Positive Behaviour

It is considered that by reading this policy you have made yourself aware of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, understand the reasons behind the Code and that you agree with this policy. It is also considered that by agreeing to and signing up to the terms of this policy that you have fulfilled the final criteria for admissions into Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College.

Parents/ Guardians are advised that students that have been accepted and chose to attend Coláiste Mhuirlinne are bound to the terms of this policy and Code.

Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College believes that its Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Behaviour is firmly rooted in mutual respect, justice, the common good and concern for health and safety.

An essential element of this is good, open communication between the partners. The school believes that such an approach will be beneficial for students, teachers, management, parents/guardians and the Board of Management alike.

It should also encourage students to take a positive view of co-operation and interdependence into their adult lives. The Positive Behaviour Policy will have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all the parties concerned within the school.

All the students attending Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are actively encouraged to make a positive impact on the school community through positive behaviour.

In our school, positive behaviour is considered to be a form of training, which empowers students to make appropriate choices in a supportive environment.

The standard expected with regard to any issue not covered below is that which people would regard as decent and reasonable behaviour.

(1) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to be in attendance every day; they are likewise expected to be in the correct classroom in time for the commencement of each class. Prior to class, students are expected to attend Assembly every morning. Therefore, school starts at 8.50. You will be deemed late if you arrive to school after this time. Students are also expected to eat in their designated areas and rest in the communal areas assigned to their year group during lunch and breaks. All students remain on the school grounds during break and lunch. Failure to abide to the above will result in a sanction.



This means:

- ✓ You are expected to be on time for school/ Assembly each day and to be on time for each class throughout the school-day.
- ✓ You provide a note from your parents / guardian explaining any unavoidable absences.
- ✓ You are expected to move from one class to another quickly and with care without visiting toilets or lockers etc.
- ✓ A keep left system is used on the stairways and other areas in the school to promote safety and must be adhered to.

Because:

- **It is difficult for a student to 'catch-up' on topics taught in class while he/ she was absent**
- **The school has a duty-of-care to its students**
- **A student arriving late unfairly disrupts the teaching / learning of others in the class.**

(2) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to have the official School Journal in all classes and to present it to a teacher when requested.

This means:

- ✓ You are expected to place the School Journal in front of you on your desk at the beginning of each class.
- ✓ You are expected to record your homework/ assignments in the journal during each class.
- ✓ You are required to maintain your School Journal in pristine condition so as to allow for easy inspection by your parents/ guardian or teachers.

Because:

- **The School Journal is the primary method of communication between the school and home.**
- **It is important to maintain an accurate record of work assigned during the year to aid you with your revision at the end of each school year.**
- **Absences from school and/or class will be recorded in your School Journal.**

(3) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to strive for academic excellence (i.e. Students will always try to do their best at class-work and at homework).

This means:

- ✓ You retain the official School Journal to record homework.
- ✓ You do (written and non-written) homework every night.
- ✓ You listen to teachers, obey class procedures and ensure your behaviour never disrupts the learning of others.



Because:

- **The School Journal is also used by teachers to record comments: it is examined and signed weekly by class tutors and parents / guardians.**
- **Homework reinforces and backs-up what has been done in class and helps prepare for exams.**
- **Disruptive behaviour is unfair to others who are trying to learn**

(4) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to be properly prepared for each subject and each class.

This means:

- ✓ You have the proper pens, pencils, copies, textbooks, materials, etc. as told to you by your teacher.
- ✓ You have any special equipment needed for particular subjects; e.g. P.E. gear, drawing equipment, etc.
- ✓ You can access your locker only at the following times: (i) before 1st class, (ii) during 'little-break', and (iii) during lunch. At these times you bring all the materials needed for the 3-classes that follow ensuring you are at class on time.

Because:

- **Full and proper participation in class is not possible without necessary materials.**
- **A student is often easily distracted if he/she is in class without all necessary materials.**
- **Class learning / teaching for others in the class is unfairly disrupted when a student arrives late for class.**

(5) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to wear full school uniform and to be groomed in accordance with school Uniform Policy.

This means:

- ✓ You are expected to maintain the school's reputation and high standards by the manner in which you wear your uniform. Your appearance reflects positively on yourself, your family and your school.

Because:

- **Members of the public associate you with the school and regard you as its representative.**
- **The uniform has been agreed by parents, students and school authorities,**
- **The uniform ensures all students are treated equally.**

(6) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to show courtesy manners and respect to people (students, staff, visitors, etc.) at all times and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority



This means:

- ✓ You are on the 'look-out-for' and you are supportive of your fellow student(s).
- ✓ You avoid engaging in any form of bullying, intimidation or 'picking-on' other people.
- ✓ You avoid arranging for others to bully, intimidate or 'pick-on' other people.
- ✓ You avoid fighting and/or you will avoid arranging fights in the school or elsewhere.
- ✓ When in the school building you will walk and also you will refrain from and help to prevent running, jostling, pushing, shoving, etc.
- ✓ You extend courtesy, manners, and respect to all people.
- ✓ You follow the instructions of teachers and others in authority without causing any disruption and you never leave class without permission. If a student leaves class without permission a parent/guardian will be called to collect the student due to health and safety risks caused by the student being unsupervised. The student may also be given an internal suspension if deemed appropriate:

Internal Suspensions:

The purpose of an internal suspension is to allow for a student to reflect on their actions, to catch up on work missed by removing themselves from class and the possibility to speak to relevant teachers/ management to help restore the situation. Internal suspensions may also be used in other situations if deemed appropriate and/ or on Health & Safety grounds. Likewise, suspensions may also be incurred for the above situations if it is deemed to be more appropriate than an internal suspension or if the actions are considered more serious or if the actions were repeated or consistent with other infringements of our Code.

- ✓ You refrain from using bad and inappropriate language in class and on the school grounds.
- ✓ You will refrain from using a different language when English is the medium of communication between the student and teacher at Coláiste Mhuirlinne/ Merlin College.

These apply at all times including when you are in class, on the school premises, when on school related activities such as games, tours, debates, theatre visits, etc. Students are also expected to show courtesy to teachers and fellow students outside of school time's to avoid behaviours which may have a negative on them when they are in school.

If students use bad/inappropriate language in class or anywhere on the school grounds they will be placed on detention. If bad language is directed at a teacher the sanction of suspension will apply.

Because:

- **EVERY PERSON is at all times entitled to the dignity of being treated with courtesy, manners and respect by other people (students, teachers, etc.).**
- **The students in a class are being denied their education if/when their teacher is being disrupted.**



- **Everyone is required to play his/her part in making the school a safe and happy place, free from any fear, misery, hurt and injury which might otherwise be present.**

(7) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to respect school property and the property of others and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

This means:

- ✓ You refrain from any attempt at destroying, defacing (i.e. graffiti), damaging and /or vandalising either school property (buildings, plant, equipment, fittings, materials, shrubs, trees, etc.) or the property of others (clothing, books, equipment, cars. etc.)
- ✓ You refrain from littering any area of the school grounds and its environs.
- ✓ You leave balls in lockers at all times unless going to and from the courts. Balls being used inside of the building will be confiscated.

Because:

- **Improved standards of cleanliness reflect well on the school, its students and its staff.**
- **It enables everyone to work and to study in a cleaner, healthier and more pleasant environment.**
- **The cost of replacing and/or repairing property / plants can be a burden on the school and parents/guardians.**
- **Health and Safety grounds.**

If balls are visible between 8.50am- 3.40 pm they will be confiscated and left in the main office. Parents/ Guardians may collect the ball by prior arrangement.

(8) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to eat/drink only in designated areas and only at allocated times and to refrain entirely from using 'chewing-gum'

This means:

- ✓ You eat/drink only in designated areas and only at designated times.
- ✓ You refrain entirely from chewing gum on the school premises and properly dispose of chewing-gum (i.e., in litter bins) as you enter the school building.
- ✓ Water is the only drink permitted and as requested by the Student Council.
- ✓ You keep water in your bag/locker and not on display in classrooms. Carrying drinks throughout the school building is not permitted.

Because:

- **Eating/drinking other than in designated areas and at designated times causes disruption and the mess created often damages books, copies etc.**
- **When 'stuck' underneath desks, tables, chairs etc. chewing-gum is very unhygienic**



- **Soft drinks are not good for student's health. Drinking water promotes good health but also allows the opportunity for Coláiste Mhuirlinne to encourage a lifestyle away from obesity.**
- **Significant additional expense is incurred when cleaning up food, drink and chewing-gum if consumed throughout the school building.**

(9) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to observe the law relating to smoking and illicit drugs and substances.

This means:

- ✓ You must refrain from smoking, consuming, possessing, supplying and / or arranging for the supply of cigarettes (including e-cigarettes), alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances within the school and its environs.

Because:

- **It is against the law.**
- **The school grounds and buildings are a smoke-free zone**
- **It runs counter to health & safety and moral issues; especially the potential for addiction, serious ill-health and death.**

(10) All students of Coláiste Mhuirlinne / Merlin College are expected to have their mobile phones and camera phones 'powered-off' and out of sight. Mobile phones and other electronic devices, such as ear-phones, MP3 players, I-pods,etc. must be kept in the student's locker. N.B Lockers must be locked at all times.

(Ref: Mobile Phone Policy)

This means:

- ✓ You are not allowed to use mobile phones in the school building.
- ✓ You do not borrow some other person's mobile telephone and use it.
- ✓ You are not permitted to use a camera phone for taking pictures on school grounds.
- ✓ You are not allowed to use recording equipment on school grounds.
- ✓ You are not allowed to contact parents/guardians or other people using your own or another person's mobile phone or device.

Because:

- **Mobile phones cause disruption.**
- **Mobile phones can be used for intimidating, bullying or demeaning other people.**
- **The school telephone can be used for urgent communication with parents/guardians and is the only mode of communication permissible.**
- **It is illegal to photograph/ record any individual without the express permission of that individual**



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Mobile phones and other devices seen or heard between 8.50am- 3.40 pm will be confiscated , put into an envelope and left in the Main Office. The SIM Card will also be confiscated.

Parents/ Guardians may collect the phone and SIM Card in the Office by prior arrangement. Parents/ Guardians must sign stating that they have read the school's ICT Acceptable Use and Mobile Phone Policy. A copy of each will be left in the Main Office.



Implementation of the Code of Behaviour

Procedures to deal with behavioural issues or Ladder of Intervention

These procedures have been guided by the NEWB Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour.

Stage 1: Ladder of Intervention: Class Teacher

All Teachers are responsible for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and share, with other teachers a common responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds and on school outings.

(a) When inappropriate behaviour occurs use positive intervention strategies. Teacher may use teacher strategy card which is on every teacher table.

When issuing a sanction Teachers should follow the NEWB guidelines regarding “Good practice in the use of sanctions”

Sanctions should be used in a way that ensures that:

Sanctions are a part of a plan to change behaviour

A sanction is a form of positive intervention. However, sanctions are unlikely on their own to change behaviour. They should be used a part of a wider plan to help the student to learn.

A sanction should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. In particular a sanction should:

- Defuse and not escalate a situation
- Preserve the dignity of all parties
- Be applied in a fair and consistent way
- Be timely

(Adapted from NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (2007))

(b) If behaviour persists record the incident. Teacher records the intervention and sanction in their own notes and in the student’s school journal. Discuss with student their behaviour to ascertain if there are reasons behind their behaviour. (Seek advice from the Class Tutor if you feel pastoral intervention is needed)

Please note 1 issue/incident = 1 class.

Students with special educational needs (SEN)

(Adapted from NEWB Guidelines)



Sanctions may be needed to help a student with special educational needs (SEN) to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student.

However, teachers should take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Students with SEN may require help to understand and observe the Code of Positive Behaviour. For instance students with SEN may need to be taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour in more tangible ways, for example through pictures, film or role-play. They may not be able to predict consequences as easily as their peers and so may be vulnerable.

The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs. Teachers should liaise with SEN co-ordinator/ team and/or ASD co-ordinator / team regarding students with identified special educational needs.

Note: Class Tutor

Primarily the Class Tutor monitors the educational progress of each student within a pastoral context. They regularly liaise with the school's Year Heads informing them of any concern academically or pastorally that they have in relation to a student(s) in their tutor group.

The Class Tutor will be responsible for:

- Monitoring the school Journal. Journals will be checked once a week where possible, giving the tutor an opportunity to review correspondence between school and home. It also affords an opportunity to check that homework is being written in properly. Please take absent notes/late notes not handed in and give to Year Head. Report to Year Head if the journal is not being signed.
- Collecting and keeping records of any money collected from the group.
- Teaching students common themes across all tutor groups
- Supporting students who the Pastoral Care Team/Anti Bullying Team or Management Team have identified as a Focus IN/OUT.
- Lending a listening ear to student's concerns.
- Liaising with Guidance Counsellor/ Pastoral Care team if deemed appropriate or necessary.
- Assisting at Assemblies. Check uniforms during assemblies. Report recurring uniform issues to the Year Head for correspondence with home.
- Checking lockers. If a student presents with an organisational issue the tutor will help organise the student's locker, showing the student how to manage themselves.
- Explaining the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- Bringing attendance and punctuality issues to the attention of Year.
- Discussing behaviour and academic progress with student suggesting ways for the child to improve.

(c) When two incidents are recorded a Stage 2 form is completed and a referral is made to the Year Head



A Stage 2 means that the matter is being brought to the attention of the Year Head via a **Stage 2 Form**. One copy goes to **the Year Head, one to be kept by the teacher and one goes into the students file.**

(d) The class teacher writes a note into student's journal informing parents of referral

Incident Referrals

(a) A teacher refers an Incident Referral Form directly to the Year Head.

Please Note: AN INCIDENT REFERRAL FORM MAY BE GIVEN BY TEACHER FOR BEHAVIOUR OBSERVED BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.

SUCH BEHAVIOUR MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: VIOLENT/ AGGRESSIVE/ THREATENING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS STUDENTS OR STAFF/ STEALING, DAMAGE TO PROPERTY/ SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ BLATANT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR/ LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION

N.B: It is not possible to cover all possible infringements of behaviour and their eventual sanctions. The Board of Management reserves the right to interpret the above and to make the final decision.

Stage 2: Ladder of Intervention: Year Head

The Year Heads' role is to follow on from Stage 1. They are to link with class tutors, parents and management.

STAGE 2 REFERRALS:

(a)The Year Head receives a Stage 2 Form from a teacher with two separate incidents recorded.

(b)The Year Head meets with the student and imposes an appropriate intervention or sanction.

(c)The Year Head gives 24hrs notice to parents via post when students are put on after school detention. (Received as part, or full sanction, due to two Stage 2 Referrals in one week).

(d) If a student does not present for detention on two occasions yet present at school then the Year Head refers the issue to the Deputy Principal/Principal who will sanction a suspension unless medically validated.

(f) If a student is in after school detention 3 times in a half term they will automatically be put on Report by the Year Head. Parents are informed by the Year Head prior to a student being placed on Report.

YEAR HEAD REPORT

If a student is in after school detention 3 times in a half term they will automatically be put on Report by the Year Head. The Year Head may also put a student on Year Head Report after receiving



an Incident Referral Form. Parents are informed by the Year Head prior to a student being placed on Report.

- **The Report period is usually lasts for two weeks.**
- **If the Report is deemed unsatisfactory by the Year Head at any stage during the Report period a request to meet parents will be made.**
- **Prior to a meeting with parents a Student Profile Form is to be given to all of the student's teachers to fill in.**

INCIDENT REFERRALS:

(a) The Year Head receives a referral from a teacher. The Year Head meets the student. The class tutor may attend if requested. Following this interview, the Year Head may follow one or more of the following actions:

- **Contact with the student's parent/ guardian.**
- **Arrange a meeting with the student's parent/guardian.**
- **Refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor if deemed necessary after meeting with the student. Inform parents of this referral.**
- **Place the student on Year Head Report. The Year Head meets the student in the morning and evening.**
- **If a Year Head receives an Incident Referral Form, he/she must complete the "Action by Year Head" section before a copy of the Incident Referral Form goes into Student file and the Year Head keeps the second copy.**
- **A Year Head refers a Single Incident Referral to the Deputy Principal after they have exhausted Year Head Interventions/ Sanctions, and/ or if they deem the incident to be so serious that it warrants further sanction.**

If the student's behaviour does not improve and /or if it considered by the Year Head that all interventions and/or sanctions to change the student's behaviour have not been successful **it** shall be moved to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Ladder of Intervention: Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal as the primary overseer of discipline in the school, may at any time impose any of the sanctions mentioned in the above Stages and may advise Year Head to impose certain sanctions and if consulted give direction in relation to procedures. One additional sanction the Deputy Principal may impose is the withdrawal from class for introspection and reflection for a brief period of time and the DP may instruct or consult with the YH on its implementation. **NOTE: Teachers may never exclude a student from their classes and/or leave the student unsupervised.**

A Stage 2 Form or Incident Referral Form may warrant a short withdrawal from class as stated above after the YH and DP consult on the matter whereby the DP will make the final decision. The DP may decide automatically without consultation with YH if situation is warranted.



The DP will normally include some of the interventions outlined below when dealing with situations.

- (a) Year Head passes all documentation relating to the student to the Deputy Principal. In most cases this is through the Incident Referral Form.
- (b) The Deputy Principal meets the student.
- (c) The Deputy Principal may consult with relevant teachers.
- (d) The Deputy Principal may refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor or a member of the Pastoral Care Team whilst investigating the matter further.
- (e) The Deputy Principal may advise the Principal of the necessity for a case conference of all parties if other bad behaviour occurs –This would include some of the following parties - the Class Tutor/Year Head/Guidance Counsellor, parents and other agencies including the EWO and/ or CAMHS or NEPS.
- (f) The Deputy Principal after investigating the issue may impose a sanction.
- (g) The Deputy Principal refers an Incident Referral to the Principal if they deem it serious and may warrant suspension or further sanctions. This would include student's failure to attend detention.
- (h) If a student is suspended (See stage 4) they return to school on Deputy Principal Card. The student will remain on the card until such a time as the DP is satisfied that the behaviour no longer needs to be monitored.

Stage 4: Ladder of Intervention: Principal

The Principal has final responsibility for the day- to- day running of the school. He or she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate. The Principal is the last voice of reason regarding a fair process that begins in the classroom. All measures must be exhausted and deemed to be so by the Deputy Principal before a referral is brought to the Principal or if a single incident is considered by the Deputy Principal after being consulted by YH to be so serious that the Principal's attention is sought straight away. The DP only will determine if this is the route to take. It must be noted, however, that this will be a seldom occurrence and that all administrative aspects of the Code's implementation must still be expected to be followed through before the Principal makes a decision regarding the situation i.e. Stage 2 Form, Incident Report and contact with parents. (It is vital that Parents are informed especially in acts of a serious nature) Concerns about a student from a Child Protection perspective should be brought to the attention of the Principal as Designated Liaison Person immediately.

The Principal may:

- Apply any of the sanctions from STAGE 1-3
- Arrange Meeting with Parents / Guardians
- Referral to Guidance for support.
- Meet with supporting agencies if relevant or necessary.
- Suspension (Ref: Policy on Suspension)
- Recommend Re-integration plan in consultation with DP. This would usually consist of regular updates on how the student is reintegrating whilst on Deputy Principal Card.
- Refer matter to the Board of Management.



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Stage 5: Ladder of Intervention: Expulsion (See Expulsion Policy)

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that is only taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school has taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of the student however the School Authorities have tried a series of interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section29).