

Deansrath Community College

Suspension and Exclusion Policy



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| Presented to the Board of Management on | 18 January 2022 |
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SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Access to educational opportunity is the fundamental right of all students. However, should an individual student's serious misbehaviour impinge upon the learning opportunity of his/her peers or affect the Health and Safety of any member of the college community, that individual will be excluded from Deansrath Community College, either temporarily through suspension or permanently through exclusion.

Suspension:

As Deansrath Community College is under the auspices of Dublin Dunlaoighre Education and Training Board, it is this body that holds the authority to suspend a student. This authority has been devolved to the Board of Management of the college, and this is then delegated formally and in writing to the Principal.

Suspension is a proportionate response to a serious misbehaviour that is causing concern.

Serious misbehaviour:

- Consistent and persistent noncompliance with the rules of Deansrath Community College or a single serious incident of noncompliance.
- Consistent and persistent noncompliance with rules which raises Health and Safety concerns or a single serious incident of noncompliance, which raises Health and Safety concerns.
- Consistently and persistently answering back and rudeness to another in our college community.
- Leaving college premises without permission.

- Making blatant sexual remarks to another.
- Making blatant racist comments to another.
- Purposeful damage to college property or the property of another.
- Stealing college property or the property of another.
- Directed unacceptable language, swearing and/or verbal abuse of another.
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones for the purpose of photography or the display of photographic material.
- Aggressive and threatening behaviour towards another.
- Consistent bullying of another or a single serious bullying incident.
- Serious vexatious allegations against any member of the school community.
- Biting, spitting, hitting, kicking or fighting.
- Bringing weapon/s or dangerous substance/s to college.
- Deliberately injuring any member of the college community.

This list is not absolute and although each of the above occasions of serious misbehaviour will be assessed on a discrete basis in terms of the number of days of suspension, the Board of Management holds the view that each of the above may incur a suspension. The decision to suspend is dependent upon the discretion of the Principal of Deansrath Community College, (or in her/his absence the Deputy Principal), together with the assisted judgment of the relevant Year Head.

Where any of the above named misbehaviours are of an extremely serious nature, then an **“Automatic Suspension”** may be invoked

Furthermore, should exceptional circumstances arise, whereby the continued presence of a student in the college could represent a serious threat to the Health and Safety of another/others, an **“Immediate Suspension”** may be imposed by the Principal to whom authority to do so has been delegated by the Board of Management of Deansrath Community College.

Procedures for Suspension:

Steps:

In all cases of suspension the Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management of the college, will follow fair procedures by ensuring that the student, and her/his parents/guardians have the right to be heard and the right to impartiality. However it is also noted, that parents/guardians have a moral responsibility to assist their daughter/son to behave according to the “Code of Behaviour” to which they agreed on enrolment into Deansrath Community College.

If an incident of serious misbehaviour occurs which warrants that a student be suspended from the school, the following procedures will be followed:

- An investigation of an allegation of serious misbehaviour will, if judged necessary, be carried out by the Year Head of the student, on behalf of the Principal.
- The Year head must discuss the issue with the Principal, (or her/his delegate), and suspension will only be imposed with her/his authority.
- The student’s parents/guardians are contacted by phone, (when possible), and by letter and where appropriate and possible, the student and her/his parents are given an opportunity to respond to the complaint and the possible sanctions.
- If a suspension is to be invoked, then the seriousness and nature of the incidents and the student’s discipline record in the college will be taken into consideration.
- A student facing an impending suspension will not be dismissed from the college until arrangements are made for her/his safe return to the care of her/his parents/guardians. However, if such arrangements cannot be made during the college day, the application of a suspension will occur at the end of college day.
- A letter detailing the length of the suspension, the reason thereof, the study plan to be followed and the return to college will be forwarded to the parents/guardians. (Appendix 1).
- During any period of suspension, a student is not allowed in the college grounds or building, unless other arrangements have been sanctioned by the Principal for specific interventions, e.g. counselling.
- Following the suspension, the relevant Year Head will document the suspension in the “Suspension Book”. The cumulative total days of suspension for each suspended

student will be calculated beside each new entry and will be available for the relevant Education Welfare Officer.

- On return to school, the student must:
 - Present at the Year Head's office.
 - The Year Head will discuss the incident with the student.
 - The returning student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
 - A reintegration plan for the student will be discussed and implemented, where appropriate.
 - The student may be placed on report for a number of days to help reinforce good behaviour.

Duration:

When the Principal has made the decision to impose a suspension, the duration of the suspension will be determined by the seriousness of the incident and the student's discipline record in the college and may range from a half-day, (.5) to an upper limit of five (5) days for any one case in exceptional circumstances: (the authority to do so having been delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management of the college)

- The Principal at each Board meeting, (as Secretary to the Board of Management of Deansrath Community College), will inform the Board of any and all incidents of serious misbehaviour which he/she deemed warranted the need for three and up to five days of suspension.
- The Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for suspensions of significant length and will convene, when possible, should the Principal deem it necessary for the Board to consider imposing a suspension of more than five days.
- For periods of suspension of six (6) days or more, the relevant Officer of Dublin Dunlaoghaire Education Training Board and the relevant Education Welfare Officer will be formally notified.

Cumulative Days:

- As Secretary to the Board of Management the Principal will convene an “Emergency Board of Management Meeting/Hearing”, for Deansrath Community College, should he/she consider that an individual’s continuous serious misbehaviour/s may incur days of suspension beyond twenty (20) days.
- The student, her/his parents/guardians and another will be invited by the Secretary to the Board to attend the emergency meeting/hearing. The parents/guardians and members of the Board of Management will receive a written account of the serious misbehaviour of the student prior to the Board Meeting.
- Prior to any emergency meeting by the Board for a hearing of extension between twenty (20) of suspension, the Principal, (on their behalf), will inform the appropriate Officer of Dublin Dunlaoghre Education Training Board and the Education Welfare Officer of the impending meeting.
- At the Board of Management Hearing, the Principal of the college and the parents/guardians or the student her/his self if he/she is over eighteen (18) years of age will state their case to the Board in each other’s presence. Each party is allowed to question directly the evidence of the other party in the presence of the Board. Parents/guardians and/or student may also make a case for lessening the sanction. The Board must ensure that they are impartial, and are perceived to be so, between the Principal and student.
- After both parties have been heard, the Principal of the college the student and her/his parents/guardians and another, (if present), leave the hearing to allow the Board to make its deliberations.
- If the Board of Management is of the opinion that the days of suspension from Deansrath Community College for the student should be extended, the Board must inform the parents/guardians of the student and the relevant Officer of Dublin Dunlaoghre Education Training Board and the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its conclusions.
- The parents/guardians of that student will be informed of their right to appeal the Board’s decision to Dublin Dunlaoghre Education Training Board within the twenty (20) college days from the date the Education Welfare Officer receives the written notification.

- The Secretary to the Board will issue them with an “Appeals Application Form”. Should students and their parents/guardians need further clarification re “Right of Appeal”, this information should be sought from Dublin Dunlaoighre Education Training Board and/or the Education Welfare Board.

The Board of Management of Deansrath Community College is guided by the principle that suspension should be a proportionate response to the misbehaviour that is causing concern. It is also guided by the principle that normally all other interventions will have been tried by the staff of the college and will have failed to achieve the desired improvement in the student’s behaviour.

The Board of Management of Deansrath Community College will review the use of suspension at regular intervals to ensure that it is consistent with school policy. The Board will also examine patterns of use to identify circumstances that might be influencing behaviour/s in the college and to ensure that the utilisation of suspension continues to be appropriate and effective.

In all circumstances as authorized by the Board of Management, the Principal is solely responsible for the day – to – day safe environment of the college and the discipline of its students. In her/his absence, this responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Principal and in the occurrence of both their absences, to members of the Senior Management Team.

Exclusion:

Exclusion of any student is known by the college to be the most severe sanction available against any student.

- In very rare circumstances, it is envisaged that exclusion may be sought by the Principal based on a single occurrence of serious misbehaviour, which will invoke an “**Automatic Exclusion**”.
- Where the constitutional rights of the majority of students is being denied by the continuous serious misbehaviour of an individual student.
- Extreme breaches of the college are Code of Behaviour and other policies.

Automatic Exclusion:

- Physical attack.
- Sexual attack.
- Serious threat of violence to a member of the college community.
- Supply of illegal drugs to other students of the college community.
- An extremely vexatious allegation against a member of the college community.

Any allegation of (the above) serious misbehaviour/s, deemed by the Principal to be of a criminal nature, will always be referred to the Gardaí.

Procedures:

- Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms a serious misbehaviour that could warrant exclusion, then a detailed investigation will be carried out by the Principal of Deansrath Community College.
- The Principal will inform the student's parents/guardians in writing of the alleged serious misbehaviour and invite them to a meeting to respond to the complaint.
- Should the parents/guardians fail to attend the meeting; an alternative meeting will be rescheduled and notified to the parents in writing.
- Should the Principal be of the view following the investigation and meeting that expulsion is warranted, the Principal will then convene an "Emergency Meeting of the Board of Management" to consider expulsion.
- The student may be suspended from the college until the Board of Management Meeting/Hearing can be convened.
- The members of the Board of Management and the parents/guardians, (the latter by registered post at least five working days prior to the meeting), will receive a written detailed account of the serious misbehaviours of the student and all interventions and assistance given by the college to the student and her/his parents/guardians in an effort to enable her/him to participate into the day – to – day life of the college,
- This account will also include a report by the Principal and any other relevant members of the staff of the college, who have attempted to redress the serious misbehaviours of the student.

- The student, her/his parents/guardians and another will be invited by the Secretary to the Board to attend the emergency meeting.
- Prior to any emergency meeting by the Board for a hearing of exclusion, the Principal, (on their behalf), will inform the appropriate Education Officer of Dublin Dunlaoghre Education Training Board and the Education Welfare Officer of the impending meeting.
- At the Board of Management Hearing, the Principal of the college and the parents/guardians or the student her/his self if he/she is over eighteen (18) years of age will state their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party is allowed to question directly the evidence of the other party in the presence of the Board. Parents/guardians and/or student may also make a case for lessening the sanction. The Board must ensure that they are impartial, and are perceived to be so, between the Principal and student.
- After both parties have been heard, the Principal of the college the student and her/his parents/guardians and another, (if present), leave the hearing to allow the Board to make its deliberations.
- If the Board of Management is of the opinion that the student should be expelled from Deansrath Community College, the Board must inform the parents/guardians of the student and the relevant Education Officer of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee and the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its conclusions.
- Furthermore, following the conclusions of the Board of Management of Deansrath Community College to exclude a student, the student may be suspended from the college on Health and Safety grounds and/or because the presence of the student will seriously disrupt the learning of her/his peers, for the following twenty (20) college days of the received notification by the Education Welfare Officer, and/or until the "Right of Appeal" has been heard by County Dublin Vocational Education Committee.
- The parents/guardians of that student will be informed of their right to appeal the Board's decision to County Dublin Vocational Educational Committee within the above twenty (20) college days from the date the Education Welfare Officer receives the written notification. The Secretary to the Board will issue them with an "Appeals Application Form". Should students and their parents/guardians need further

clarification re “Right of Appeal”, this information should be sought from County Dublin Vocational Education Committee and/or the Education Welfare Board.

- Where the twenty (20) day period has elapsed and where the Board of Management of Deansrath Community College remains of the view that the student should be expelled from the college, the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel. The Board of Management of the college will delegate to the Chairperson and the Principal the above task.
- Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.

As with suspension, the Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the college at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with college policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify causes that may be influencing behaviour in the college, and to guarantee that exclusion is used appropriately.

Appendix 1.

[Will be issued on headed paper]

To: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

This is to notify you that your daughter / son _____ has been
suspended from the College for _____ day(s).

Reason for suspension:

Study Plan to be followed:

Your daughter/son _____ is to return to school on _____ with all the given punishment work completed. Your daughter / son is in your care during the period of supervision. During suspension the student is not allowed in the vicinity of the school unless otherwise arranged. All suspensions may be appealed to the Board of Management.

Helen Taylor

Principal