

## **Introduction**

Le Cheile Secondary School is a Catholic school committed to promoting Christian values and affirming the personal worth and dignity of each student. The school is inclusive of students from all cultures and backgrounds and celebrates diversity. We aim to ensure that Le Cheile Secondary School is a place where students feel at ease and cared for enabling them to relate to one another and to staff in an open, respectful and trusting manner. The school values the role of parents in the education of their children and seeks to work in partnership with them.

Our Code of Behaviour is developed in the context of the school's mission statement and motto:

*“The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the Le Cheile Charter. It is underpinned by a philosophy of education that has at its centre the unique dignity of the human person as a child of God.”*

*WELCOME WISDOM WITNESS*

The Code of Behaviour is an integral part of the positive school ethos where learning and personal development can take place in a safe and caring environment.

The Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management following consultation with parents/guardians.

## **Scope of Policy**

The Board of Management of Le Cheile Secondary School sets out this Code of Behaviour in accordance with section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the ethos of the school, and the Charter of Le Cheile, which promotes justice and equality. It is governed by the provisions of the Education Act 1998 (as amended), the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004, the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (as amended), the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003, relevant Department of Education and Skills Circulars, in particular Circular M33/91 ‘*Guidelines Towards a Positive Policy for School Behaviour and Discipline*’, and also the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) guidelines, ‘*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*’.

## **Aim of the School**

- To be a **welcoming** and caring community in which each member is given a sense of significance and importance and is conscious, in turn, of the needs of others.
- To provide a social and academic environment which fosters **wisdom**.
- To strive to ensure that Christian attitudes and values are knit into the fabric of school life.
- To provide through the curriculum, teaching methods and allocation of resources, teaching and learning situations which enable all students to:
  - Develop their intellectual capacity to the full.
  - Stimulate curiosity and imagination.
  - Develop the aesthetic awareness, assist in their physical and moral development, and acquire an appetite for further knowledge and skills in later life.
- To prepare each pupil to be a **witness** to of our democratic society, equipped to play an active part in its development.
- To be a participating partner in the wider community, welcoming parents and other friends of the school to share in our activities, endeavours and celebrations.

In order to achieve our aims the co-operation of everyone and a high standard of behaviour is expected from all our students in order to create the positive atmosphere that is conducive to good teaching and learning. Whilst recognising and affirming the uniqueness and individuality of each student, we also recognise that all members of our school community have to develop the qualities of respect and self-discipline, and show consideration and care for themselves and others and co-operate with the authorities of the school. Our school values respect for all, kindness and a willingness to help others, fairness, forgiveness, courtesy and good manners.

There are three elements to building our Le Cheile School:

- Welcome
- Wisdom
- Witness

**I show that I am part of a welcoming school when:**

- I am friendly and kind to others: I am willing to help other students with their studies or encourage them to get involved in games and extra-curricular activities.
- I care for people who have a different personality to me and I allow them to be part of my group. I never bully others, either through words or actions.
- I treat others as I would like them to treat me.
- I recognise and appreciate the role of the adults in the school community: I greet them on the corridor, open doors for them and stand back for adults on the corridors.

**I grow in Wisdom when:**

- I develop my talents to the best of my ability, I am attentive in class and conscientious about my studies. I do my homework every night.
- I realise that any unnecessary disruption on my part prevents others working and concentrating: I have to be particularly careful that I am not seeking unnecessary attention.
- I care about the consequences of my actions and choices: I realise that if I break school rules I will face a sanction which is a outcome of my behaviour.
- I avoid causing unnecessary work for those who care for the school - I always clear up after myself, I never waste resources because I know what is my excess could be everything to someone else.
- I avoid activities that may endanger the safety or well-being of others.

**I witness to the spirit of my school when:**

- I am punctual, courteous and honest - I care about my reputation.
- I care about what is happening in my local community and in far away places. I do my best to raise awareness of injustices and I fundraise for people in need.
- I participate in religious services in a reverent way.
- I care for my health and appearance. I wear my full uniform during the school day and I have a high standard of hygiene.
- I leave areas such as toilets, showers, washbasins clean and ready for others to use.
- I take pride in keeping the school clean, tidy and free of litter and graffiti. I never use chewing gum in school.
- I realise that bad language is unnecessary and offensive to other people.

- I show care, not just for the school, but also for the means of transport I use to and from school. I am courteous and mannerly in the shops and on the street remembering that I am representing my family and my school wherever I am.

## **School Procedures**

### **Attendance and Punctuality:**

- Attendance at school is a legal requirement in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 200. Students must attend school each day between 8.40am and 3.40pm (Monday to Thursday) and 8.40am to 1pm (Friday). Under the Education Welfare Act, the school management is obliged to report absences aggregating 20 days to the Education Welfare Board.
- Students must be in attendance with their class tutor for registration at 8.40am.
- A student who arrives late for Tutorial Class at 8.40am must report to the Principal. The student must sign the Late Book and have his/her journal signed.
- Parents/Guardians must explain all absences in writing in the school journal on the day the student returns to school. This note should be given to the class tutor during Tutorial Class.
- If for any reason a student must leave school early, written permission from parent or guardian must be given beforehand in her journal. The journal must be presented to the office prior to 8.40am. Parents/Guardians must be contactable by phone to confirm note.
- Students must remain on the school premises at lunchtime.
- No student may absent him/herself from class. Any student on the corridor during class time must be wearing the classroom pass. Anyone feeling unwell should report to the office. Students who are unwell can be collected by parents/guardians or must return to class.
- Family holidays should be taken outside the school term. Students are legally obliged to be in full attendance during the school term.

### **Homework and School Journal:**

Homework reinforces school work. It should be completed to ensure that students make the most of their opportunities to get a good education. The school journal is an important home/school link.

- All students are obliged to have a student journal with them every day.
- Students must put it on their desk at the beginning of each class. It will be checked every morning by their Class Tutor.
- Students must record homework and classwork in it.
- Parents /Guardians will write notes concerning absences, late arrivals and appointments in the journal.
- Teachers may record notes for parents/guardians in the journal.
- Parents/Guardians must sign the journal at the end of each week.
- Defacing the journal in any way is not permitted. The Year Head may request the student to replace the journal, at their own expense, if it is defaced.
- Students are not allowed to write in another student's journal.
- Homework must be completed to the best of the student's ability. If not, the homework journal must be presented to the subject teacher with an explanatory note.

- It is the student's responsibility to catch up on any homework given during any period of absence from school.

### **School Uniform and Appearance:**

- The school uniform must be worn correctly at school, travelling to and from school and at all school functions.
- Non-school jackets must not be worn with the school uniform.
- The correct P.E. uniform must be worn at all P.E. classes.
- Black shoes (including soles) must be worn at all times. Runners are not allowed. If there is a valid reason why the correct footwear cannot be worn, this must be communicated in writing by parents/guardians.
- The wearing of tracksuit bottoms outside of P.E. class is strictly forbidden: these can only be worn when a medical certificate is supplied from a doctor specifically stating that the student has no option but to wear them.
- A student who is out of uniform (including incorrect shoes) will be requested to wear items of uniform provided by the school.
- A student in breach of uniform will receive a detention. Refusal to comply with the dress code of the school will warrant a suspension. Students wearing the Le Cheile Secondary School uniform represent the school to the wider community. Their behaviour outside school must never bring the school into disrepute. Please see uniform list in Appendix.
- Parents/Guardians are requested to mark each item of the uniform with the student's name. Parents/Guardians must replace any lost items of the uniform promptly.
- Students may wear a single pair of small ear studs in the earlobes and one ring. No other visible jewellery is permitted.
- Make-up and nail varnish may not be worn. Students will be directed to remove same if worn.
- Students are not allowed to wear facial jewellery/body piercings. Any tattoos must not be visible.
- Hairstyles must be neat and tidy. Hair accessories must be discreet and only in one of the shades of the school uniform.

### **Mobile Phones/Internet Use**

- Where a student brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be switched off during the school day and may not be used for any purpose on the school premises.
- In order to assist the school in implementing the policy, parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school may be made through the office and students are directed to use the office telephone if needed.
- Students found in contravention of the mobile phone rule will have their phone and sim card confiscated for three days and the parent/guardian will collect the phone at the end of this period from the school principal. On the second and each subsequent occasion the phone and sim card will be confiscated for one week and parent/guardian must collect the phone from the school principal.
- Where it can be established that a pre-set alarm has caused the disturbance, the phone may not be confiscated.
- When a student's phone is confiscated the parent/guardian will be contacted before the end of the school day to notify them that their son/daughter has had his/her phone confiscated. Should a student use her mobile to call, text or communicate she will also be sanctioned with a detention.

- No photographs may be taken recordings (video or audio) made with mobile phones. Using a phone in this way can seriously infringe on people's rights. Serious sanctions will be imposed.
- Any incident of a student using a mobile phone, or any form of social media, to bully other students will be treated as a serious breach of discipline. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to invoke the Gardai in such incidents.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for students/parents.

#### **Substance abuse:**

- Smoking in any part of the school building or its environs is banned in keeping with the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2004
- Students should not smoke while in uniform.
- Smoking is also banned on any school related activity.
- Alcohol may not be brought into the school or used while involved in school activities. In the event of a student misusing alcohol the parents/guardians will be informed and appropriate action taken to promote the young person's welfare. Misuse of alcohol by any member of the school community in/on school grounds is prohibited.
- The misuse of all other legal and illegal substances is strictly forbidden, and each case will be dealt with in line with the school's Substance Abuse Policy.

#### **Rewards**

Le Cheile Secondary School promotes good and improved behaviour by students through a system of recognition and reward. Students who obey school rules, produce good work, try hard, behave well, participate in all aspects of school life and contribute to the caring spirit of the school will be acknowledged and rewarded. Among the ways of rewarding good behaviour are:

- A points system is in place which promotes and awards good behaviour. Each student begins the year with 100 points. Additional points are awarded when students go above and beyond what is necessary to promote a caring atmosphere in the school. The student with the most points at the end of the year is awarded The 'Le Cheile Spirit' Student of the Year.
- Verbal praise and acknowledgement
- Public affirmation by school management, e.g over the intercom, at assembly, in newsletters, on website, etc.
- Written comments in journal and on homework.
- Display of work done.
- There are awards on Prize Giving Day for students who have excellent attendance, high academic achievement and student who excel at a variety of extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership roles within the school as Class Prefects, class representatives on the Student Council, Special Duties Prefects and Head Boy and Head Girl.
- Trips, outings, films, etc.

In addition:

- Parents can access their child's behaviour profile on line at any time.
- Parents/Guardians receive an report on their child's progress twice a year.
- An individual teacher may adopt an award system in his/her class.

#### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

Breaches of the Code of Behaviour takes from the teaching and learning and the caring environment of the school. It is the responsibility of the school management to provide an environment where all

members of the school community can feel safe and happy. Le Cheile Secondary School takes a whole school approach to the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. When dealing with inappropriate behaviour students are given every chance and opportunity to address inappropriate behaviour and to learn from their mistakes. Inappropriate behaviour can be separated into low level, serious and very serious and each category is dealt with differently. Repeated low level inappropriate behaviour will be seen as defiance and treated as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.

#### Low Level inappropriate behaviour

- Failure to attempt/complete/present work in class or homework.
- Copying homework.
- Not having correct materials for class.
- Failure to provide relevant notes promptly.
- Not producing journal at the beginning of each class and not having it signed.
- Calling out of turn in class.
- Leaving seat in class without permission.
- Persistently off task.
- Lateness
- Not wearing full school uniform.
- Use of bad language.
- Littering
- Not having mobile phone turned off during school hours.

#### Low level sanctions:

##### (a) Once-off

- Verbal reprimand.
- Note in journal.
- Loss of points.
- Item confiscated
- Assigning penalty worksheet
- Change of seat in class.

##### (b) Persistent

- Temporary withdrawal from class to supervised location.
- Letter home.
- Lunch time detention.
- After school detention - parents/guardians will be notified in advance.
- Parents requested to come into the school.
- Carry out a useful task in school, e.g. Litter warden. White weekly report card.
- Referral to Year Head.

#### Serious inappropriate behaviour

- Persistent non-compliance with school rules and policies.
- Rudeness/aggression towards another member of the school community.
- Bullying of any kind.
- Racist/sexist/homophobic abuse.
- Fighting.
- Missing school or class without permission.

- Theft.
- Repeated failure to follow instructions.
- Repeated failure to attend detention.
- Persistent lateness.
- Copying during exams.
- Disruption of exams.
- Defacement/interference with school property.
- Smoking on school site or while in uniform.
- Forging the signature of parents/guardians

#### Serious Level Sanctions

- Suspended for between one and three days.
- Withdrawal of privileges (not allowed on outings, matches, stripped of leadership role, etc.)
- Referral to outside agency (NEPS, HSE, etc)
- Put on Yellow or Red weekly report card.
- Put on attendance monitor card.
- Fines and detention for smoking.
- Parents/Guardians called in to meet Principal/Year Head
- Managed move with Year Group.
- Loss of points.
- Repair, replacement or compensation for damage to property.

#### Very Serious inappropriate behaviour

- Illegal/dangerous items in school.
- Unauthorised recording of audio/video/photographic material
- Abuse of the internet.
- Persistent bullying/racial abuse/rudeness/harassment/name calling/verbal abuse.
- Serious acts of violence.
- Damage to people or property.
- Assault of any member of the school community.
- Selling and/or in possession of banned substance on the school site or environs.

#### Very Serious Sanctions:

- Longer term suspension
- Referral, with parent/guardian to the Board of Management
- Behaviour contract drawn up with school management, parent/guardian and student.
- Managed move to another school.
- Offsite placement/alternative provision.
- Loss of points.
- Compensation for damage caused.

#### **Suspension and Expulsion**

The Board of Management is obliged pursuant to section 15(d) of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) to publish its policy on Suspension and Expulsion and in so doing have regard to the ethos of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned.

*General Principles:*

There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour, where it will be necessary to remove a student from school for a period of time or for the Board of Management to expel a student permanently from the school.

*Principles of Natural Justice:*

The Principal will ensure that the principles of natural justice will apply in the context of any proposal to suspend or expel a student. These principles translate into procedural fairness with regard to the implementation of sanctions. Accordingly, the students and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be afforded

The right to be heard which includes

- the right to know why the sanction is being imposed;
- the right to know the manner in which the issues will be determined.
- the right to know the allegations in the matter and any other information which will be taken into account.
- The right to an appeal.

The right of a person to an impartial decision includes:

- the right to impartiality in the investigation and decision making process;
- the right to an absence of bias by the decision maker.

### **Suspension**

The Board of Management of Le Cheile Secondary School has the authority to suspend a student and that authority has been formally delegated to the Principal.

A student may be suspended, pending investigation and discussion with parents, for serious and very serious incidences of inappropriate behaviour.

In the case of an unacceptable level of repeated inappropriate behaviour a student may be suspended when in the professional opinion of the school authorities, all other strategies have been exhausted, and the student shows no willingness to change his/her behaviour.

A student will be suspended from school when their points drop to 50.

*The purpose of suspension is:*

- to make it clear that the student's behaviour is seriously unacceptable;
- to allow the student time to reflect, in consultation with his/her parents/guardians, on her behaviour and accept responsibility for his/her behaviour.
- to help the student to realise that even more serious consequence will result if his/her behaviour does not change.

The school will endeavour to work with parents/guardians with a view to assisting a student who has been suspended to improve his/her behaviour so that he/she can successfully rejoin the school community as soon as possible. On occasions it may be necessary to arrange counselling to assist the student. All members of the school community are important in Le Cheile Secondary School and when one is hurting and acting out the whole school community is diminished.

*Responsibilities:*

Only the school Principal may suspend a student from school. The Principal has authority, under the “Articles of Management of Secondary Schools” to suspend “any pupil for a limited period and shall report any such suspension to the Board of Management at its next meeting.” [Article 19(b)]

The Board of Management affirms the right of the Principal to suspend a student for a period of three days without recourse to the Board. When the Principal deems a longer suspension necessary, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for approval. However, where it is impracticable to convene a meeting of the Board within the timeframe, the Board reserves the right to authorise the Principal to impose a suspension of up to five consecutive days with the sole approval of the Chairperson.

*Procedures:*

In all instances where suspension is applied, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted and notified. In most instances parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to meet with the Principal or person acting on the authority of the Principal, to discuss the matter.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified and arrangements will be made with them for their child to be collected from school.

In all cases a formal letter of notification will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s).

All suspensions are recorded in the student’s file and are reported to the Board of Management. The student will be regarded as being in the care of his/her parents/guardians during the period of his/her suspension and must not come near the school during this period.

*Procedure for re-introduction following suspension:*

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must accompany the student to school on his/her return from suspension and meet with the Year Head or Principal before attending class.

The student will be placed on a report card for at least a week following his/her return.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be requested to agree to certain procedures to assist the student, e.g. refer the student for psychological assessment, counselling or other pastoral support services.

*Appeals:*

A parent/guardian or a student over 18 years of age may appeal, in writing, a suspension by the Principal to the Board of Management in the first instance.

The letter of appeal addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Management, must set out the ground for the appeal.

The appeal will be heard as soon as is practical.

The appeals process will at all times follow the principles of natural justice:

- Appellants have the right to be made aware of all details relating to all allegations against the student.
- The Board of Management may appoint a sub-committee to hear the appeal, especially where this will facilitate an early hearing.

- The parent/guardian and the principal will present their arguments to the Board/Committee after which they will leave the meeting while the decision is being made.
- They should remain available to the Board/Committee who may seek further clarification from either party.
- The decision of the Board of Management/Committee is binding and will be communicated in writing to the parent/guardian.
- If dissatisfied the appellants have the right to appeal to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) pursuant to section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended).

In the event of an appeal the suspension may be deferred in exceptional circumstances.

It is possible that the suspension may be served before the hearing by the Board of Management of the appeal. In this case, if the appeal is successful the record of suspension will be removed from the student's file.

The school is obliged to inform the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) pursuant to section 21 (4) (a) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000:

- if the suspension is longer than 6 days **or**
- if the student has been suspended for a cumulative total of more than 20 days during the school year.

The Board will review formally 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 20 days or more. Where the total number of days for which the student is suspended in one school year reaches 20, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed in writing of their right of appeal pursuant to section 29 of the Education Act as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

#### *Grounds for Removal of Suspension:*

Unforeseen grounds for appeal of a suspension may arise but in general a suspension may be removed in the event of:

- successful appeal to the Board of Management;
- successful appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended);
- an alternative strategy being agreed following consultation with parents;
- new circumstances coming to light.

### **Expulsion**

#### *General Principles:*

Expulsion is considered to be a last resort.

#### *Circumstances when expulsion may be considered:*

Expulsion will generally be considered by the Board of Management, only after every effort at rehabilitation has failed and when all other sanctions in the Code have been exhausted.

While it is impossible to foresee every eventuality the following represent situations where expulsion may be considered:

- the student's actions pose a real threat to the health, safety and welfare of others;
- the student's actions constitute a continuous and serious disruption of the learning of others;
- the student concerned can no longer benefit by remaining in this school;
- when the student concerned has, through continued misconduct, displayed an unwillingness to accept the standards set out in the school Code of Behaviour;
- Any other gross misbehaviour.

*Responsibilities:*

If, in the judgement of the Principal, a student should be expelled, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management for its decision. The Board of Management alone has the power to expel a student.

*Expulsion Procedure:*

The Principal must communicate her recommendation to expel to the Board of Management which has the sole right to decide on the matter. The procedure will be as follows:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed in writing of the situation, the reasons for considering this course of action, copies of any and all documents, statements and disciplinary records supporting the case.
- The letter will notify them of their right to appeal any decision to expel pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by Section 4 of the Educational (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.
- Pending the outcome of any proceedings the principal reserves the right to suspend the student in accordance with Section 24 (5) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 if, in her opinion, such an action is appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained and that the safety of students is secured.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be invited to attend and present their case to the Board meeting at which the issue will be discussed.
- The principal will present the case for expulsion to the Board of Management in the presence of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their response.
- Both parties will leave the meeting while the Board of Management deliberates.
- The Board may further request information from the Principal and Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Student.
- In weighing the situation the Board of Management will take into consideration:
  - The student's record of behaviour
  - the effect the behaviour has on other students' rights.
  - any expert advice deemed necessary.
  - any mitigating factors affecting the individual's behaviour; these might include age, previous record of behaviour, particular personal circumstances, the effect of peer pressure in individual occurrences.
- The Board will make a final decision to expel/not to expel the students.

The decision of the Board will be formally communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s) by registered letter. If the decision is to expel, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

Pursuant to Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the Board shall, before expelling the student, notify the Education Welfare Officer of its opinion and the reasons for expulsion.

In accordance with section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the decision to expel will not take effect for 20 school days following receipt of the notice of expulsion by the National Educational Welfare Board.

*Appeals:*

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) or student (if over 18 years of age) will be informed of their right to appeal a decision to expel a student under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.
- Documentation will be supplied in relation to an appeal under Section 29 with the letter, giving notice of intention to expel.
- Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date on which the decision of the school was notified to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
- In the event of an appeal being lodged, the Board of Management will co-operate fully in all procedures initiated by the National Educational Welfare Board.

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that might be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

**The Plan for Reviewing the Code:**

The principal and staff, in partnership with the Board of Management will review the Code of Behaviour of Le Cheile Secondary School on \_\_\_\_\_, having familiarised themselves with the Guidelines.

Where aspects of the school code are highlighted to be reviewed or addressed, the Board of Management, together with the Principal, will prioritise these areas and develop an action plan, within a timeframe, for doing this work.

Formal Adoption of the Code of Behaviour by the Board of Management of Le Cheile Secondary School, Tyrrelstown:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Le Cheile Secondary School, Tyrrelstown