

PORTUMNA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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Revised Code of Behaviour

Version 2.3

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MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Community School committed to;

. . the provision of a comprehensive educational system available to all.

. . the recognition and development of each student's social, intellectual, physical and spiritual potential.

. . the achievement of high standards in teaching, learning and performance.

. . the establishment and maintenance of a co-operative, supportive partnership between school, home and community.

. . the professional development of staff.

RATIONALE:

This revised Code of Behaviour has been drawn up in the light of the Guidelines for Schools issued by the National Educational Welfare Board. Students, Parents/Guardians and Staff have been consulted in the preparation of this document which was reviewed by the Board of Management in May 2021. The policy may be reviewed and or amended at the discretion of the BOM thereafter.

In keeping with the NEWB guidelines, this Code specifies the standards that are expected, the measures that may be taken for breach of these standards, procedures in relation to suspension and expulsion, the grounds for removing a suspension and the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

Rules are necessary to facilitate the smooth running of the school and to enable every student to have access to a good education.

Effective order in a school helps to create a vision and establish a climate for people to achieve their highest level of potential, their personal best.

This Code of Behaviour applies equally to all students in the school and its procedures are to be followed in respect of all students. The Principal retains a discretionary judgement in the application of this code in particular circumstances.

This Code of Behaviour applies to all school activities, outings, trips, school tours and occasions whenever these occur.

If a parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing/app that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student will result in said not student not fulfilling the admissions criteria as per the admissions policy.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR EXPECTED

Attendance and Punctuality

(1) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to be in attendance every day, and to be in the correct classroom in time for the commencement of each class. As, school starts at 8.55am. You will be deemed late if you arrive to school after this time. If this is the case, you must sign in at the front office (3 lates=1 YH detention, persistent lates will be referred to YH as per the ladder of referral)

All Junior students (1st to 3rd year) always remain on the school grounds including during break and lunch. Failure to abide to the above will result in a sanction.

Students are expected to:

- Be on time for school each day and to be on time for each class throughout the school day.
- Provide a note/app note from your Parents/Guardians / guardians explaining any unavoidable absences/lates.

- Move from one class to another quickly and with care without visiting toilets or lockers etc.

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) School Journal

All students of Portumna Community School are provided with the official School Journal, they are expected to have this in all classes and to present it to a teacher when requested.

Students are expected to:

- Place the School Journal in front of you on your desk at the beginning of each class.
- Record your homework/ assignments in the journal during each class.
- Maintain your School Journal in pristine condition to allow for easy inspection by your Parents/Guardians/ guardians or teachers.

Because:

- The School Journal is a 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.

(3) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to strive for academic excellence (i.e. Students will always try to do their best at classwork and at homework).

Students are expected to:

- Retain the official School Journal to record homework.
- Complete (written and non-written) homework every night.
- Listen to teachers, obey class procedures, and ensure your behaviour never disrupts the learning of others.

Because:

- The School Journal is often used by teachers to record comments: it is examined and signed weekly by Year Heads/ and or Teachers/DP 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 Portumna Community School are expected to be properly prepared for each subject and each class.

The book scheme was extended to senior cycle commencing in August 2025 for the academic year 2025/2026. This will continue for the academic year 2026/2027. All books remain the property of the school and must be returned to the school in good condition otherwise parents/guardians will be liable.

Students are expected to:

- Have the proper pens, pencils, copies, textbooks, materials, etc for every class. You should have any special equipment needed for subjects; e.g., P.E. gear, drawing equipment, etc.
- You can access your locker only at the following times:

(i) Before 1st class (before 8:55) (ii) During ‘small-break’(11-11:20), and (iii) during lunch (1:20-1:55)
At these times you bring all the materials needed for the 3-classes that follow ensuring you are at class on time.

As:

- 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 the necessary materials.
- Class learning / teaching for others in the class is unfairly disrupted when a student arrives late for class.

(5) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to wear full school uniform and to be groomed in accordance with School Uniform Policy and the Code of Behaviour. School management reserves the right to determine what is inappropriate in terms of uniform & presentation.

Students are expected to:

- Maintain the school’s reputation and high standards by the way 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 ratified by the Board of Management.
- The uniform ensures all students are treated equally.

(6) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to show courtesy manners and respect to people (students, staff, visitors, etc.) always and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority.

This means:

- Students are on the ‘look-out-for’ and you are supportive of your fellow student(s).
- Students avoid engaging in any form of bullying, intimidation, or ‘picking-on’ other people.
- Students avoid arranging others to bully, intimidate, or ‘pick-on’ other people.
- Students avoid fighting and/or you will avoid arranging fights in school or elsewhere.

- When in the school building you will walk and you will refrain from and help to prevent running, jostling, pushing, shoving, etc.
- Students extend courtesy, manners, and respect to all people.
- Students 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/external suspension if deemed appropriate:

Year Head Detention/SMT Detention:

1. YH Detention will run one day per week after school (Thursday) for 1 hour 4.05-5.05- you will be notified of this at least 24 hours in advance. Principal/DP detention will run on Fridays for 2 hours 1.25-3.25.

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.

- Students refrain from using bad and inappropriate language in class and on the school grounds.

This always applies 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 times 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 may 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 Portumna Community School are expected to respect school property and the property of others and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

Students are expected to:

- 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.)

- Refrain from littering any area of the school grounds and its environs.

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/guardians.
- Health and Safety grounds.

(8) All students of Portumna Community are expected to eat/drink only in designated areas and only at allocated times and to refrain entirely from using ‘chewing gum’

This means students are expected to:

- Eat/drink only in designated areas and only at designated times.

Use of Shared Dining and Social Spaces

The school canteen (gymnasium during break and lunch periods), Room M (a designated classroom used as a social space for eating during break times), and the outdoor areas of the school grounds are available for student use during designated times.

Students are expected to contribute to the upkeep of these shared spaces by:

Cleaning up after themselves.

Wiping down tables with the sanitising wipes provided.

Using bins appropriately for waste disposal.

Leaving food preparation areas clean and tidy after use.

Maintaining a clean and respectful environment in these areas supports the wellbeing and comfort of all members of the school community.

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.

Note: Water/flavoured water is the only drink permitted on the school grounds. (Teachers own classroom rules apply).

Because:

- Eating/drinking other than in designated areas and at designated times causes disruption and the mess created often damages books, copies etc. Designated areas utilised as teaching spaces outside of scheduled break periods must be maintained in a clean, orderly, and presentable condition at all times following use. All staff, students, and visitors are required to treat these spaces with respect and to take collective responsibility for ensuring their upkeep. Maintaining the cleanliness and tidiness of these areas is essential to support a conducive learning environment for all users.
- When ‘stuck’ underneath desks, tables, chairs etc. chewing gum is very unhygienic
- Soft drinks are not good for students’ health. Drinking water promotes good health but also allows the opportunity for Portumna Community School 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 Portumna Community School are expected to observe the law relating to smoking/vaping and the use of illicit drugs and other substances.

This means students are expected to:

Refrain from smoking, vaping, 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) Mobile Phone, Smartwatch, and Personal Device Policy

(Refer to the full Mobile Phone Policy for further details)

In accordance with the school's Mobile Phone Policy and the Department of Education's Circular 0045/2025, the use of mobile phones, smartwatches, and similar personal electronic devices is strictly prohibited for all students while on school property during the school day.

This includes:

- Use of mobile phones or smartwatches within the school building or on school grounds.
- Borrowing or using another person's mobile phone, smartwatch, or device.
- Use of camera phones or smartwatches for photography or video recording on school premises.
- Use of any recording equipment on school grounds.
- Contacting parents/guardians or others using personal or borrowed devices, including smartwatches.

Rationale

- These devices cause disruption to teaching and learning.
- They may be used to intimidate, bully, or demean others.
- The school provides access to a landline for urgent communication with parents/guardians.
- It is unlawful to photograph or record individuals without their explicit consent.
- As outlined in Circular 0045/2025, this policy supports:
 - Improved learning environments by reducing distractions.
 - Reduced risk of cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content.
 - Increased face-to-face social interaction during break times.
 - A phone-free environment that supports student wellbeing and academic focus.

Enforcement

Any mobile phone, smartwatch, or similar device seen or heard between 8:55 a.m. and 3:55 p.m. will be confiscated. The device and its SIM card (if applicable) will be placed in a sealed envelope and held by the Deputy Principal.

- First offence: Confiscation for 24 hours.
- Second offence: Confiscation for 48 hours.
- Third offence: Confiscation for 7 days. The device may be collected by a parent/guardian by prior arrangement.

- Further offences: Will be treated as major breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour and addressed through the school's disciplinary procedures.

Storage of Devices

Students are advised to keep their mobile phones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices in their lockers (locked) during the school day. Devices should be turned off and stored securely to prevent theft or misuse.

Parental Acknowledgement

Parents/Guardians are required to confirm that they have read and understood the school's ICT Acceptable Use and Mobile Phone Policy. This can be completed via the school app. Hard copies are available upon request.

Exceptional Circumstances

In rare and exceptional cases, device use may be permitted with prior approval from the Principal (e.g., participation in the Tackle Your Feelings TY Programme or for medical/educational needs as outlined in Circular 0045/2025).

State Examinations

These rules are consistent with the State Examinations Commission (SEC) regulations, which strictly prohibit the use of mobile phones, smartwatches, and similar electronic devices during state examinations. This alignment reinforces the importance of our policy and prepares students for national assessment standards.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Procedures to deal with behavioural issues or Ladder of Intervention¹

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 as suggested on the ladder.

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

(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 or in the student's school journal and or on VSWare. Discuss with student their behaviour to ascertain if there are reasons behind their behaviour. (Seek advice from the Year Head if you feel pastoral intervention is needed)

Students with special educational needs (SEN)

(Adapted from NEWB Guidelines)

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.

¹ See Appendix 1: Ladder of Referral

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

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 coordinator/ SEN team and/or Year Head regarding students with identified special educational needs.

Note: Year Head

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

The Year Head will be responsible for:

Monitoring the school Journal. Journals will be checked once a week where possible, giving the Year Head an opportunity to review correspondence between school and home. It also affords an opportunity to check that homework is being written in properly. **Please ensure that Year Heads are provided with absent notes/late notes via the app. Medical certs can be handed into the school office or given directly to the year head.**

- Delivering assemblies on common themes and year group specific topics
- Supporting students who the Student Support Team or Management Team have identified as a Focus IN/OUT.
- Lending a listening ear to student's concerns.
- Liaising with Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain/Student Support Team if deemed appropriate or necessary.
- Checking uniform
- Correspondence with home.
- Checking lockers. If a student presents an organisational issue the YH may 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 the Parent/Guardian.
- Discussing behaviour and academic progress with students suggesting ways for the child to improve.

(c) Where there have been several incidents **and the class teacher has exhausted positive intervention strategies** the class teacher makes a referral to the Year Head by completing the escalations section on VSware.

A Year Head Referral means that the matter is being brought to the attention of the Year Head. The class teacher writes a note on VS Ware stating YH referral and completes the escalations section under behaviour.

Teachers can use the format outlined below when referring a student up the ladder:

- *Date of referral*
- *Name of student*
- *Description of student's behaviour*
- *Action taken by teacher before referral to Year Head. Examples of actions that may have been taken, this list is not exhaustive: change of seating plan, discussion with student, extra work/homework, note home in journal (signed by Parents/Guardians/guardians), break detention and/or other.*
- *Any other actions/sanctions taken by the teacher*
- *Any other relevant information*

Major Incident Referrals

(a) A teacher can refer directly to the Year Head.

Please Note: A MAJOR INCIDENT REFERRAL MAY BE GIVEN BY A 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/CARS/UNIFORM

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 Referral: Year Head

The Year Heads' role is to follow on from Stage 1. They are to link with class teachers, Parents/Guardians/guardians and management.

STAGE 2 REFERRALS (YH Referrals):

(a) The Year Head receives an escalation from a teacher with separate incidents recorded and strategies used by the class teacher.

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

(c) The Year Head gives 24hrs notice to Parents/Guardians via the school app when students are put on YH detention. (Received as part, or full sanction, due to two Stage 2 Referrals (YH) in one week).

(d) If a student does not present for detention yet presents at school, then the Year Head refers the issue to the Deputy Principal/Principal who will sanction an after-school detention unless medically validated.

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

YEAR HEAD WHITE REPORT

If a student is in year head detention twice in a half term, they will automatically be put on White Report by the Year Head. The Year Head may also put a student on Year Head Report after receiving a Year Head Referral (via escalations) if they deem this a suitable intervention. Parents/Guardians are informed by the Year Head prior to a student being placed on White Report.

- The Report period usually lasting for five days.

- If the Report is deemed unsatisfactory by the Year Head at any stage during the Report period, a request to meet Parents/Guardians will be made.
- Prior to a meeting with Parents/Guardians a Student Progress Report may be given to all the students' teachers to fill in.

YEAR HEAD REFERRALS:

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

- Contact the student's Parent/ Guardian.
- Arrange a meeting with the student's parent/guardian.
- Refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain/SST if deemed necessary after meeting with the student. Inform Parents/Guardians 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 a Year Head escalation, he/she will complete the "Action Taken" on VSware
- A Year Head may refer 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 is 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. YH will escalate on VSware.

- Student Name & Year
- Date of Year Head Referral
- Describe the student's behaviour after the Year Head Referral
- Actions taken by Year Head before Referral to DP:
 1. Meeting with student & class teacher (target agreed on)
 2. Phone call home (update on situation)
 3. Arrange meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
 4. Year head detention (Thursday after school)
 5. Student support file opened / Referral SST/SEN
 6. Students put on White Report Card
 7. New targets set; Year Head Updates VS Ware & teachers involved with action taken
 8. Student placed on Year Head Report
 9. Referral to DP if White Report is unsatisfactory

Stage 3: Ladder of Referral: Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal 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 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. (Please use buddy system or call for assistance from YH/DP/P)

A Year Head Referral 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 Deputy Principal Referral/Escalation **on VSWare or via email/YH meeting.**

(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 Student Support whilst investigating the matter further.

(e) The Deputy Principal may advise the Principal of the necessity for a disciplinary meeting of all parties if other bad behaviour occurs –This would include some of the following parties - the Class Teacher/Year Head/Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain, Parents/Guardians 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 to the Principal if they deem it serious and may warrant suspension or further sanctions. This may include student's failure to attend detention.

(h) If a student is suspended (See stage 4) they return to school on Deputy Principal Yellow 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 Referral: 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 Year Head Referral/Escalation and contact with Parents/Guardians. (It is vital that Parents/Guardians 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 / Guardians
- Referral to Student Support Team/Guidance/Chaplain for support.
- Meet with supporting agencies if relevant or necessary.
- Red Report Card
- 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 Yellow Card or Principal's Red Card.
- Refer matter to the Board of Management.

Stage 5: Ladder of Referral:

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).

Sanctions for Specific Breaches of Discipline

Specific Sanctions will be applied to specific breaches of the Code of Behaviour as per the following chart:

Breach	Sanction
Class disruption	Verbal reprimand
	Note in Journal/VSWare
	Sanction as per ladder of referral
Repeated Class disruption	As above
	Break detention
	Lunchtime detention
	After school detention, further sanctions from the preceding list
Persistent Class Disruption	Referral as per Ladder of Referral, sanctions from the preceding list.
Smoking	3 stage response; see response to smoking
Mobile phones/Digital Devices	See separate section which follows
Late in morning	Sign in via electronic tracking system in the office-3 unexplained offences in one half term then after school detention- Attendance Officer or YH will issue
Late during day	Ladder of referral
Uniform	See separate section which follows
Mitching	See separate section which follows

Other Breaches

Violent or threatening behaviour	Suspension. Further breaches of this rule may result in longer suspension or permanent exclusion. Portumna Community School is
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	insistent that it is a safe learning and working environment for all.
Bullying	See Anti Bullying policy.
Malicious damage to property	Restitution of damage. Possible report to Gardai and possible suspension from school.
Stealing	Restitution of stolen items. Possible report to Gardai and possible suspension from school.
Verbal abuse	Apology, Contract of behaviour, Possible suspension. (See Ladder of Referral)
Refusal to obey instructions	A refusal to obey instructions is a refusal to accept the authority of the school to carry out its work and undermines the learning of the student and of others. After a formal warning is issued to the student about the gravity of the situation and the offer of a final opportunity to comply is ignored, it will be referred immediately to the Year Head or Deputy Principal for resolution. Suspension from school may be imposed by the Principal and Parents/Guardians / guardians will be asked to guarantee the future compliance of the student. (See Ladder of Referral)
Smoking/Vaping on school premises (forbidden by law) and on all school outings & events.	See Anti-Smoking/Vaping policy
Possession and/or use of illegal substances. Use of substances other than prescribed medications to affect consciousness and or behaviour.	Suspension. Possible permanent exclusion.
Possession and/or consumption of alcohol.	Suspension. Possible permanent exclusion.
Harassment of any sort (including but not limited to physical or sexual harassment)	These matters will be dealt with in keeping with the appropriate policies binding on community schools in the Republic of Ireland. Copies available from the Principal on request.
Student Drivers	Possible report to Gardai and possible suspension/expulsion from school.

The list is not exhaustive, and the school reserves the right to impose sanctions for other violations which it considers appropriate.

RECORD KEEPING

Records of student behaviour will be kept using VSWare, students' journals and Year Heads will keep paper copies of relevant details. The Deputy Principal and Principal will keep copies of all student details as they deem necessary.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The procedures to be used will be in keeping with the NEWB guidelines and the relevant legislation viz. The 1998 Education Act, the 2000 Education Welfare Act.

Suspension is a power devolved to the Principal of the school by the Board of Management. The Principal may suspend a student from school for up to three days. With the agreement of the Chairperson of the Board of Management a further two-day suspension may be imposed by the Principal. The Board may impose a longer suspension on the recommendation of the Principal in circumstances where there is a serious breach of standards or, in the Principal's judgement, there exists a health and safety risk to students and / or staff. This longer suspension may be imposed through consultation with the Chairperson of the Board pending a meeting of the Board.

All suspensions must be notified to the Board. All suspensions may be appealed to the Board by writing to the Principal but suspensions must be served pending the meeting of the Board to hear an appeal. Should an appeal be successful then the record of suspension will be expunged from the student's record.

A suspension will be imposed after an investigation by the Principal into the behaviour which may warrant a suspension. The principles of natural justice will be observed; the student will get a chance to put their side of the case, Parents/Guardians / guardians will be informed of the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that suspension is a possible sanction and will get an opportunity to respond. In the case of an immediate suspension a preliminary investigation will be made by the Principal and Parents/Guardians / guardians will be notified. It may be necessary for a student to be collected from school by Parents/Guardians / guardians or a nominated responsible representative in the event of an immediate suspension on the grounds of safety. Once a decision to suspend is imposed, the Principal will write to the Parents/Guardians / guardians outlining the period of suspension and the reasons for it, commitments to be entered into and right of appeal. All suspensions must be served pending the hearing of any appeal.

Permanent exclusion (Expulsion) from school is the most serious sanction the school can impose and can only be done by the Board of Management upon the recommendation of the Principal. Expulsion will normally be a sanction of last resort although the Board may consider expulsion for a first offence which could include: a serious threat of violence against another, actual violence, supply of illegal drugs, sexual assault. The procedures to be followed regarding expulsion are:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal to expel
- Consideration by the Board of Management and the holding of a hearing which Parents/Guardians / guardians and student attend
- Board of Management deliberation and decision
- Notification to the Educational Welfare Officer of the decision to expel; a suspension may be imposed by the Board of Management for the days leading up to and including the day on which the expulsion becomes final.
- Consultations by the EWO
- 20 days after the day on which the EWO received notification of the decision to expel, the Board of Management confirms the decision to expel.
- The expulsion is then final.

SCHOOL UNIFORM (REVIEW COMPLETED JANUARY 2020-DECEMBER 2022-RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECEMBER 2022)

Rationale

School Uniform Policy 2026/2027

The school uniform is an integral part of our Code of Behaviour and reflects the values and standards of our school community. All students are expected to adhere to the following uniform guidelines:

1. Official Uniform Requirement

- Only school uniforms purchased from authorised manufacturers and approved suppliers are recognised as official. Uniforms from other sources will not be accepted. Neat and tidy dress is expected. Uniform should be clean, uncreased, and in good repair. Non-uniform items may be confiscated and may be retained for collection by parents and guardians at the end of term. All uniform items should be clearly labelled with the student's name. Good personal hygiene is expected.

2. Uniform Components

- Jumper
 - Brand: Hunter Knitwear
 - Style: SCKNH
 - Colour: Navy/Sunshine
 - Crested with the school crest
- Blazer (Optional)
 - Type: Varsity Blazer
 - Colour: Navy
 - Crested with the school crest
 - Note: The blazer can be worn in place of the jumper or with the jumper.
 - Note: Students in the school chamber choir must purchase a blazer as it is required for competitions.
- White Shirt or Blouse
 - Plain white shirt/blouse
 - Polo shirts are not permitted
- Tie
 - Navy with teal/gold and brown stripe- A school tie must be worn properly and clearly visible.
- School Jacket
 - Style: Hybrid Hunter Padded Jacket or 1880 Padded/hooded jacket (recommendation from the Students Council 2025/2026 as an alternative option)
 - Colour: Navy
 - Crested with the school crest
 - Compulsory for 1st to 5th Years
 - O'Neill's jackets already owned may be worn
 - No other jackets are permitted on campus (with the exception of 6th years 26/27 who are permitted to wear their own coats at break and lunch ONLY for 2026/2027) Please note in 2027/2028 all students are expected to wear a school jacket or blazer.
- Skirt (no shortening or rolling of the skirt permitted, skirts must be knee length)
 - Brand: Hunter
 - Style: HMCS

- Colour: Blue/Grey/Silver
- Trousers
- Girls: Casablanca Girls Lily School Trousers – Grey/Turquoise (Pinstripe)
- Boys: Mid Grey School Trousers (e.g., Virginian, Whites, Banner)
- Tights/Socks
- Colour: Navy or Black
- Footwear
- Shoes or Smart Shoe Runners are acceptable
- Material: Leather or Leather Effect
- Colours: Black, Brown, Navy (for shoes); Black only (for shoe runners)
- No visible logos allowed
- Canvas runners and light canvas-type shoes with no or very slight heel are not permitted
- Shoes must be practical and hard-wearing
- The school will determine if footwear is acceptable
- Students must have the correct footwear at the start of the academic year
- You may seek advice from the school before purchasing, even during August

3. Physical Education (PE) Gear

- Available from approved stockists and the O’Neills website
- Currently optional, but a compulsory PE uniform is under consideration for 2026/2027
- Students must have the requisite gear and equipment, clearly and indelibly marked
- Safe and appropriate footwear and clothing is required for all activities

4. Prohibited Items

- Hoodies, sweatshirts, or half-zips are strictly prohibited on school grounds.
- School crested sports gear is not a substitute for school uniform.

5. School Outings and Trips

- Full uniform must be worn in school prior to departure and upon return
- Students will be informed in advance if uniform is not required during outings/trips

6. Daily Presentation

- Students are expected to present in full uniform daily
- **School Management reserves the right to decide what is inappropriate in terms of uniform and presentation**
- **Failure to comply with the uniform policy is a breach of the school’s Code of Behaviour.**
- Uniform checks will take place throughout the year
- All students must adhere to the uniform policy for all state and house exams

7. Approved Stockists

- Duffy’s Drapery, Portumna
- Lolipopz, Portumna
- Dervans, Loughrea
- School Wear Centre, Galway

Breaches

- Teachers may refer breaches of school uniform to the Year Head. If a student is out of uniform during the day, the class teacher checks the journal/VShare. If the issue is signed or recorded by the Year Head, it is regarded as being dealt with. If not, the student is referred to the Year Head at the end of class.
- The Year Head issues a warning to the student and may contact home. Repeat offences by the student will result in escalation in the referral system. Refusal to wear the school uniform is in breach of the school's Code of Behaviour.

All students are expected to adhere to the school uniform policy as an essential part of our school ethos. In cases where students persistently fail to comply with the policy without a valid reason, the school may implement appropriate disciplinary measures in line with the school's Code of Behaviour. These may include meetings with parents/guardians, written warnings, or other proportionate actions.

THE JOURNAL

Rationale

The Journal is one of the key communication tools on the educational journey of you the student in Portumna Community School. A partnership is created between Parents/Guardians, Students and Teachers on that journey and the journal records the steps in that partnership. As such the Journal is to be respected and students must have it in class during every class period, it must be accessible to the teacher on the student's desk and the student must present it at the request of any teacher.

- The journal must be used to record all homework assignments.
- The journal must be kept free of graffiti.
- Defaced journals will be confiscated, and students will have to replace them with a new journal.
- Lost journals must be replaced; the replacement of a school journal is €10
- The journal should be signed each week by Parents/Guardians / guardians.
- If a journal is signed for a breach of the Code of Behaviour, Parents/Guardians/guardians are expected to sign same to acknowledge they have read same.

Sanction:

If a class teacher notices a defaced journal, the journal should be confiscated and given to the Year Head. The Year Head informs the student that the Journal must be replaced within three working school days. Further breaches to this procedure will result in escalation within the referral system.

ATTENDANCE (SEE SEPARATE ATTENDANCE STRATEGY)

All absences should be explained on the school app. When students are absent in the morning then the school will send a text message to the Parents/Guardians / guardians. Parents/Guardians / guardians have no need to reply unless they sent their daughter / son to school and are informed that they are absent. If the student is absent with the permission of Parents/Guardians in keeping with the acceptable absences listed below, then Parents/Guardians should update the school app accordingly. If the student was sent to school and Parents/Guardians receive a text message they should phone the school immediately and speak to the appropriate Year Head, or Deputy Principal or Principal.

Under the Educational Welfare Act 2000 we are required by law to report to the National Educational Welfare Board if we are concerned about a student's attendance and must notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a student has missed 20 days in the school year, even if those absences are accounted for by a note.

Absences which are acceptable to the school fall into two main categories:

- (1) Illness/Certified Illness: Sufficient to require the student to remain at home and preventing the student from engaging in any activities outside the home.
- (2) Family emergencies, such as serious illness of family members, funerals or other crises. If absences for family reasons can be anticipated in advance notice should be sent via email to the relevant YH/school office.

School policy on unacceptable absences:

School Attendance Policy

At our school, we regard student attendance with the same level of importance as adult attendance in the workplace. Regular and punctual attendance is essential for academic success and personal development.

Unacceptable Absences

Absences for the following reasons are not considered valid and will not be authorized:

Family trips or holidays during term time

Shopping or personal errands

Inclement weather (unless extreme)

Part-time employment

Minor or non-essential reasons

We rely on the support of parents and guardians in upholding this policy. If you are experiencing difficulties related to school attendance, please contact us, we are here to help and advise.

Late Arrivals

Students arriving late for school (morning or afternoon) must report to the school office to sign in.

Three unexplained late arrivals in a half-term will result in a Year Head detention.

Persistent or unexplained lateness may lead to further consequences, including after-school detention, Saturday detention, or other sanctions as determined by the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Signing Out During the School Day

Students who need to leave school during the day must:

Obtain permission from their Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal.

Sign out at the school office (show written permission from YH/P/DP to school secretary in journal).

Be collected and signed out by a parent or guardian at the front office (for students under 18).

(Parents/Guardians must have completed the sign out section of the app in advance of collecting their child from the school and on arrival then complete the electronic sign out system at the main office- parents/guardians will no longer be able to use the paper sign out system from August 2026-this is in the interest of health & safety)

Note:

All students from 1st to 6th Year, including those aged over 18, must obtain permission from their Year Head before signing out of school.

In addition, for students over 18 who sign out, an SMS notification will be sent to parents in the interest of health and safety, to ensure their safety. While parents are not required to collect their child in these instances, the school will continue to issue this notification as a precautionary measure.

Students under 18 must be collected by a parent or guardian, they are not permitted to leave the school premises alone.

TRUANCY POLICY

(Leaving class or school grounds without permission from an appropriate school authority)

Truancy is considered a serious breach of school rules. It disrupts the learning environment and negatively impacts the student's academic progress and personal responsibility.

Definition

Truancy refers to any instance where a student leaves class or the school premises without prior consent from a teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal.

Consequences of Truancy

Students found to be truant will:

Have the incident reported to their Parents/Guardians.

Receive an appropriate sanction, such as after-school detention, proportionate to the time missed.

Face internal suspension for repeated or serious offences.

Escalation Procedure

First Offence:

A meeting will be held between the student, parent/guardian, and Year Head.

Second Offence:

A meeting will be arranged with the student, parent/guardian, Deputy Principal, and Year Head.

Third Offence:

The Principal will meet with the student and parent/guardian. The student will be referred to the National Educational Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.), and the Board of Management will be informed.

Sanctions such as detention or internal suspension will be applied as soon as practically possible following each stage of this process.

HOMEWORK

In Portumna Community School we are committed to ensuring that all students benefit fully from the

education provided by regular homework. This helps to consolidate the work done in the classroom, enables students to work on their own initiative and fosters self-reliance.

Homework Procedures

Rationale:

Homework is an integral part of the learning experience. It is given to reinforce the learning that has taken place in the classroom and to build on previous classwork. A range of homework is given and corrected on a regular basis. This includes written exercises, oral learning and project work. Subject teachers will give detailed homework requirements specific to their subject cognisant of Whole School Planning and Subject Department guidelines.

1. The class teacher checks written homework. This encourages students and helps determine progress.
2. Homework may be examined orally.
3. Teachers keep a record of completed written homework assignments.
4. Longer written exercises may be given at the weekend.
5. Good homework is acknowledged through VSare or the School Journal.
6. If a student fails to produce a homework assignment this is communicated to the Parents/Guardians/guardians through use of School Journal/recorded on VSware and for repeated offences may be referred to the Year Head as per the Ladder of Referral.
7. Tests may be used to check learning homework.
8. Homework is set by teachers before the end of each class. Students are given sufficient time to note the homework in their journals.
9. Students are expected to:
 - Record in their Journal at the end of each class all homework given – written and oral.
 - Revise the work covered in the class.
 - Present homework well – dated and written in their copies in a neat and clear fashion.
 - Present homework on time.
10. Homework should be undertaken in a quiet calm atmosphere, which will be similar to the circumstances under which the students will subsequently have to take examinations. It is also best undertaken in a carefully organised and tidy environment where the required material is readily to hand. Study is best done in blocks of time with a period of relaxation between sessions.
11. There are no precise rules for time students should spend on homework – it depends on the age of the student, the number of subjects to be studied and the level. The following general outline may be helpful:

First Year Two hours per night

Second Year Two hours per night

Third Year Three hours per night

Transition Year- A minimum of One hour per night

Senior Cycle A minimum of Four hours per night

12. Parents/Guardians can help their sons/daughters in the following ways:

- By providing a quiet comfortable environment for homework.
- By setting aside a regular time and place for homework.
- By establishing a routine in so far as it is possible.
- By checking that homework is being done.
- By checking the journal daily.

Assessment

Please refer to the school's full assessment policy for further information regarding exam protocol and student expectations.

See excerpt from same below:

Portumna Community School is committed to upholding academic integrity and fairness during all assessments and examinations. Cheating undermines the values of honesty and respect and will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Definition of Cheating

Cheating is defined as any dishonest behaviour or attempt to gain an unfair advantage during an exam. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from another student
- Using unauthorised materials or devices (e.g. notes, phones, smartwatches)
- Communicating with others during the exam
- Impersonation or any form of deception

Consequences of Cheating

- If a student is suspected of or caught cheating, their exam paper may be withheld and not sent for correction.
- If the paper has already been submitted, the results may be permanently withheld or provisionally withheld pending investigation.
- The decision to return exam papers or results lies with the subject teacher, Exam Secretary, and school management.
- In cases involving State Examinations, any suspected malpractice will be reported to the State Examinations Commission (SEC), which may impose its own sanctions, including disqualification from one or more subjects.

Reporting Procedure

- Suspected Cheating: Any concerns should be reported promptly to the Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Exam Secretary.

- **Caught Cheating:** The exam paper should be confiscated immediately and the incident reported. An incident report form may be required.

Appeals Process

- Students may appeal decisions regarding withheld results.
- Appeals must be submitted within a specified timeframe.
- Appeals will be reviewed by the Board of Management, who will reassess the evidence and issue a final decision.

Examination Conduct Guidelines

To ensure fairness and order during the house examination period, the following rules apply:

Attendance

- Students must attend all scheduled exams and study periods.
- Absences will result in no grade being awarded unless due to:
 - Certified illness (with valid medical certificate)
 - Bereavement

Home Assessments

- Missed assessments may be sent home for practice only.
- These will not be graded, but teachers may provide feedback based on overall term performance.

Study Periods and Late Arrivals

- Students may not be signed in or out during study periods without valid documentation (e.g. medical certificate).
- Late arrivals may not be permitted to enter the exam room.

Electronic Devices

- The use of phones, smartwatches, fitness trackers, or any electronic devices is strictly prohibited during exams.
- Possession of such devices during an exam may be treated as an attempt to cheat.

MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES (INCLUDING SMART WATCHES)

Rationale:

Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices capable of recording audio and / or pictures are not allowed in school as their use can constitute a serious disruption of school life and of class quality as well as posing risks of breach of privacy and enabling bullying behaviour. In addition, the un-moderated access to the internet from such devices renders them unsuitable to be brought into school.

Parents/Guardians / Guardians should note that students may use the office telephone free of charge to make essential calls once permission to do so has been obtained.

Offence 1: The device is held for 24 hours in the Deputy Principal's Office.

Offence 2: The device is held for 48 hours in the Deputy Principal's or Principals Office.

Offence 3: The device is held for 7 days in the Principal's Office. The parent/guardian may be required to call for it.

Offence 4: Further offences are classed as major breaches of the code of behaviour and will be dealt with in line with the ladder of referral.

Students use of personal laptop computers or computers of any sort must receive the expressed permission of the Principal/Deputy Principal/SEN teacher before using such machines. Any such usage must comply with the school's Acceptable Use Policy for the internet. In the event of technological advances in the manufacture of electronic devices outstripping the rate of renewal of this Code of Behaviour all determination of the acceptability of such electronic devices shall be made by the Principal pending the formal review process addressing the issue.

Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

The school's Code of Behaviour operates in accordance with national legislation, including the *Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020* (Coco's Law). Please refer to the *Bí Cineálta Policy* for further information.

Smoking and Use of E-Cigarettes (Vaping) Policy

Rationale

Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes (vaping) are prohibited in schools under Irish legislation. The school promotes healthy lifestyle choices and is committed to maintaining its status as a Health Promoting School and an Active School.

Education on the health risks of smoking and vaping is delivered through the SPHE curriculum at Junior Cycle.

According to the HSE, vaping products often contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance that can harm adolescent brain development and increase the risk of future addiction.

The HSE and national drug monitoring bodies have raised concerns about the use of vapes to inhale illicit substances, including synthetic cannabinoids (SCRAs), which pose serious health and legal risks.

Policy Statement

Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited on all school premises, including:

- School buildings
- School grounds
- The walkway/biodiversity site
- The front of the school

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including students, staff, and visitors.

Student Conduct

Students found smoking or vaping, or in the company of others who are smoking/vaping on school grounds or while in school uniform, will be considered in breach of this policy.

The policy also applies during:

- Extra-curricular activities
- School tours
- Any school-related events, whether on or off campus

Sanctions for Students

All smoking/vaping materials will be confiscated.

Parents/Guardians will be informed by the Year Head.

Disciplinary actions may include:

- Suspension
- Exclusion from school trips or events
- In cases where a student is found to be vaping or in possession of vapes containing illegal substances, or selling/distributing such items, the school will treat the matter with the utmost seriousness. This may result in:
 - Immediate suspension
 - Permanent exclusion
 - Notification to An Garda Síochána, in line with the school's Child Protection Policy and legal obligations under the Misuse of Drugs Acts.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community are expected to comply with this policy.

Parents/Guardians are expected to support the school in enforcing this policy.

School staff and management are responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance.

References

[HSE – E-Cigarettes and Vaping Guidance for Schools

(PDF)](<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/tobaccocontrol/resources/information-and-guidance-on-e-cigarettes-and-vaping-for-schools.pdf>)

[Drugs and Alcohol Ireland – Synthetic Cannabinoids in Vapes](<https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/39078/>)

Health & Safety Policy

The school implements all Health & Safety regulations in accordance with applicable Irish legislation. The safety and well-being of all members of the school community is a top priority.

- All students are expected to behave in a manner that promotes the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Any behaviour that endangers the safety of others will be treated as a serious breach of school rules.
- The full Health & Safety Policy Statement is available upon request from the Principal.

Property Policy

Respect for personal and school property is essential to maintaining a safe and orderly environment.

Student Responsibility

- Students must respect their own property, the property of others, and all school property.
- All personal belongings should be clearly and indelibly marked with the student's name.
- Students are strongly advised not to leave money or valuables unattended.

Lockers

- Lockers are available to students for a small rental fee.
- Students are responsible for keeping their lockers secure and in good condition.
- Any damage to a locker/loss of lock will result in an additional/replacement charge.

Storage of Belongings

- Coats and school bags must not be left overnight on school premises unless stored in a locker.
- Bicycles must be parked in the designated bicycle rack.
- Electric scooters and electric bikes are not permitted on school grounds. Students are not allowed to drive or park them on-site, including in the bike shed, due to health and safety concerns.
- Student cars are not permitted to be parked on school grounds due to limited space and safety considerations.

School Books

- Students must take proper care of books provided under the Free Book Scheme.
- Books must be returned in good condition. If books are lost or damaged, parents/guardians will be liable for the replacement cost.

Student Drivers:

Students who are given permission by parents/guardians to use their own or parents' cars to come to school have a huge trust placed in them to behave responsibly, firstly in relation to taking due care on the roads and secondly in relation to school attendance. This trust involves:

- Arriving at school on time.
- Remaining in school for the full day.
- Making sure that the car is left locked and secure and is not used by themselves or any student over the course of the day.

If they must leave school early for any reason the procedures as outlined above (signing out with permission apply-also applies to those Over 18)

Students must not bring cars or motorcycles onto the school grounds unless special permission has been sought from and granted by the school Principal.

Failure to abide by above points may be classed as a major offence and will be dealt with in line with the code of behaviour.

Anti-Bullying

Core Principles

Portumna Community School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of the school community. Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- Every individual has the right to enjoy their education and leisure time free from bullying.
- All members of the school community are entitled to a learning environment where they feel safe, valued, and respected.
- Bullying includes any repeated unkind actions, comments, teasing, ridicule, harassment, or oppression, whether carried out in person or through electronic means (e.g. social media, messaging apps, etc.).
- The intention behind the behaviour is not the determining factor—if the action causes harm or distress, it will be treated as bullying.

Reporting and Support

Portumna Community School is a “reporting school”—bullying is too serious to ignore.

- Students are encouraged to report all instances of bullying, whether they are victims or witnesses.
- Reports can be made to any member of staff, including:
 - Class Teachers
 - Year Heads
 - The Chaplain
 - The Guidance Counsellor
 - The Deputy Principal
 - The Principal
- Students will be given opportunities to report concerns confidentially, including:
 - Submitting a written note
 - Participating in anti-bullying assemblies
 - Speaking directly to a trusted staff member

Policy Framework

This policy is part of the school’s wider commitment to student well-being and is aligned with the Department of Education’s Anti-Bullying Procedures.

The policy was reviewed in 2024/2025 in line with the new Bi Cineáltas guidelines introduced nationally.

Further Information

For full details on procedures, definitions, and supports, please refer to the comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy, available from the school office or on request from the Principal.

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed in 2026/2027 under National Guidelines.



LADDER OF REFERRAL



EXAMPLES OF BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE

- BULLYING*
- SMOKING/VAPING*
- TRUANCY*
- TALKING

- NO HOMEWORK
- NO MATERIALS
- DISRUPTING TEACHING & LEARNING

- NO MOTIVATION
- LATENESS
- REFUSAL TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS

- PHONE
- UNIFORM
- CARS

(FULL SCHOOL UNIFORM MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES AS PER THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR)

RED REPORT



Disciplinary Committee Meeting

YELLOW REPORT



Meeting with Parent/Guardian

WHITE REPORT & SANCTIONS



Meeting with Parent/Guardian



Phone call to Parent/Guardian

Record on Vsware and send note home to be signed



RESPONSES TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

NB

Where a major offence occurs, this can be referred instantly to Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal

Sanctions by teacher

5. B.O.M. BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ↑

- 2 Decision to expel student
- 1 Appeals against suspension

4. PRINCIPAL ↑

- 3 Board of management referral (Principal will complete a written report for the BoM outlining all actions taken to date at all stages of the Ladder of Referral)
- 4 RED REPORT (sanctions may be issued while on red report such as after school detention/internal suspension/suspension) (Principal monitors and C&C)
- 3 Targets are agreed on/referral to outside agencies/SST where necessary
- 2 Disciplinary Meeting
- 1 Meet student and Deputy Principal or YH

3. DEPUTY PRINCIPAL ↑

- 2 Escalation to Principal in the event that the inappropriate behaviour continues/no solution has been found
- 4 External Suspension/Internal Suspension
- 3 Student may be placed on YELLOW REPORT (DP monitors and C&C) and or After School Detention with Principal/Deputy Principal. (*Student may be referred to SST and or External Agencies)
- 4 Disciplinary Meeting
- 3 Set targets with student and record on Vsware
- 2 Phone Call home to Parents/Guardians
- 1 Meet Student and Year Head

2. YEAR HEAD ↑

- 2 Referral to Deputy Principal if WHITE REPORT is unsatisfactory /where no solution has been found - Year Head will escalate to Deputy Principal
- 4 New targets set for student → Year Head updates Vsware and teachers involved with action taken
- 3 Student may be put on WHITE REPORT CARD (Year Head monitors) → may be referred to SST
- 4 Student Support File may be opened for recurring students → SEN/SST (Check & Connect)
- 3 Phone home/have meeting with Parent/Guardian (update on situation)
- 2 Year Head detention - 1 set day a week with Year Head rotation
- 1 Meet with student and class teacher (targets to be agreed on)

1. CLASS TEACHER ↑

- [PHONE - Confiscated + given to Deputy Principal (First offence 24 hours/2nd offence 48 hours) and parent collects]
- [UNIFORM Note expected from Parent/Guardian for Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal]
- 4 Year Head Referral → Teacher will escalate to Year Head
- 3 Refer - Teacher will refer to Year Head ongoing problems/problems where no solution has been found
- 4 Escalate to YH ongoing issues/problems where no solution has been found detailing teacher interventions to date
- 3 Teacher Lunchtime/Break time detention-note in journal
- 2 Talk to student
- 1 Responses to inappropriate behaviour; change seating plan/talk to the student after class/give a warning

SST/as part of SST



Behaviour plan with Parent and outside agencies

Feedback targets/action taken to relevant staff



Support from SST



Referral/Meeting with SST (Student Support Team) (SS file may be opened)



New targets communicated to class teacher



Year Head/Teacher meeting for recurrent misbehaviour of students - Inform Parent/Guardian



Positive intervention strategies Goal Setting

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR

