



Scartleigh National School

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Scartleigh National School
Cairde le chéile ag foghlaim

Suspension Policy

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Suspension Policy

1.1 Suspension:

Suspension is defined as requiring the child to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days or part of a school day.

1.2 Appropriateness of Suspension:

Suspension can provide respite for staff and the child, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff and parents time to plan ways of helping the child to change unacceptable behaviour.

1.3 Authority to Suspend:

The discipline committee has the authority to suspend a child. The discipline committee is made up of Denise O' Donovan – Principal, Niamh Fitzgerald – Deputy Principal and Karen Morrissey – AP1. This authority is delegated to the discipline committee for suspension periods of no longer than three days. A decision to suspend a child for a specified period in excess of three days will require approval from the Board of Management.

1.4 Grounds for Suspension:

Suspension is a proportionate response to a behaviour that is causing concern. A decision to suspend will be considered if:

- The pupils behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The child's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes threat to safety
- The child is responsible for serious damage to property
- The child is responsible for a serious act of serious misconduct

1.5 Factors to consider before suspending a child:

(a) The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

What is the precise description of the behaviour?

How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been? Has the problem behaviour escalated in spite of interventions tried? (b) The context of the behaviour

What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in the yard, in a particular teacher's class, in a group)? What factors may have triggered incidents of serious behaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural, family factors)? What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the child? Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. home circumstances, special needs)? (c) The impact of the behaviour
How are the other students affected by the student's behaviour? What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class? Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers? Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others? (d) The interventions tried to date

What interventions have been tried? Over what period? How have the interventions been recorded and monitored? Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour? Has the intervention of NEPS or other such psychological assessment or counselling been sought where appropriate Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available? Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem? Has any other agency been asked for assistance? (e) Whether the suspension is proportionate?

Does the behaviour warrant suspension? Is the standard being applied to judging the

behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student? (f) The possible impact Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made? Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour? How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour? Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

1.6 Behaviour Management Plan:

Suspension allows the school:

- To set behavioural goals for the child's re-integration
- The opportunity to plan other interventions
- To impress on the child and his/her parents the seriousness of his/her behaviour

2.1 Forms of Suspension:

Informal: The child is kept in at break times to do school work.

Informal: The child is sent home for part of or during the school day.

Immediate: The Discipline Committee sends the child home for a specified time.

The Discipline Committee is authorised by the Board to implement an immediate suspension for up to three days.

Suspensions in excess of three days: Suspension for a period in excess of three days will be implemented in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Board.

Automatic Suspension: The student will face automatic suspension for incidents of:

- Serious assault causing injury
- Sexual assault
- Serious damage to property
- Gross misconduct as determined by the Discipline Committee

The above named incidents

Rolling suspensions:

A child may be suspended again if he/she:

- Engages in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension
- Fair procedures are followed
- The standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other child

2.2.Procedures in respect of suspension

The school will always follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a child. The factors outlined in 1.5 will be considered. The reason for the suspension as in 1.4 will be documented and communicated to the parents.

(a) by telephone when the Discipline Committee is implementing an informal, part day/during the day suspension

(b) both by telephone and in writing when implementing an immediate or a suspension in excess of three days.

2.3 Communication with Parents

Parents will be given the opportunity to respond when informed that a suspension period is to be imposed. The Board will offer parents the opportunity to appeal a Discipline Committee's decision to suspend a child. Where the Board implements an immediate suspension in excess of three days, the parents may appeal to the Patron. Parents will be invited to meet with the Principal to discuss both the suspension and the plan to re-integrate the child following the period of suspension as outlined in 1.6.

3.1 Appeals

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a child, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the child has been suspended to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

3.2 Section 29

Where the total number of suspended days for which a child has been suspended reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2007. At the time of being informed of any such suspension, the parents will be told of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Parents will be given information about how to appeal.

3.3. Implementing the suspension.

Investigation

The Discipline Committee will conduct a preliminary investigation to establish the grounds on which an immediate suspension is to be implemented.

A formal investigation will follow immediately and a record kept.

Written Notification. (Appendix 1)

The Discipline Committee will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend outlining:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension (see 1.5)
- Study programme to be followed
- Appeals procedure (see 3.1 and 3.2)
- Section 29 appeal procedure where relevant
- Arrangements for reintegration

3.4 Grounds for removing a suspension

The Board of Management may remove a suspension for any reason. The Secretary General of the Department may direct that a suspension be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

3.5 Records and reports

Formal written records will be kept of:

- the investigation
- the decision and rationale for decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the decision

Review Timetable

This Suspension Policy will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

This Suspension Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the B of M

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Standard letter for suspensions not exceeding three days.

Dear (Parents name)

I have been authorised by the Board of Management to suspend (child's name) for a period of (specify length of suspension). The suspension will begin on (specify date) and (child's name) will return to school on (specify date). The reason for the suspension is (specify grounds on which suspended is based 1.5). On returning to school, (child's name) is to report to the Principal's office where the conditions of (child's name) re-integration to the school will be discussed. You may appeal this suspension in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management c/o the school address.

Sincerely
(Principal)

Standard letter when suspension is in excess of three days.

Dear (Parents name)

The Board of Management has decided to suspend (child's name) for a period of (specify length of suspension). The suspension will begin on (specify date) and (child's name) will return to school on (specify date). The reason for the suspension is (specify grounds on which suspended is based 1.5). On returning to school, (child's name) is to report to the Principal's office where the conditions of (child's name) re-integration to the school will be discussed. You may appeal this suspension in writing to the Patron, Bishop John Magee, Cobh.

Sincerely
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Standard letter when the suspension will bring the total number of suspended days imposed on a child to twenty or more.

Dear (Parents name)

The Board of Management has decided to suspend (child's name) for a period of (specify length of suspension). The suspension will begin on (specify date) and (child's name) will return to school on (specify date). The reason for the suspension is (specify grounds on which suspended is based 1.5). On returning to school, (child's name) is to report to the Principal's office where the conditions of (child's name) re-integration to the school will be discussed. As the imposition of this suspension will bring the number of suspended days imposed on (child's name) to (specify number) you may appeal this suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 by writing to The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1. Please enclose a copy of this letter and state the reasons on which you are basing your appeal.

Sincerely
(Principal and or Chairperson depending on length of this suspension)