

**MOUNT TEMPLE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**  
**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**



**Introduction**

The Board of Management sets out below the rules, regulations and procedures which have been drawn up in consultation with students, staff, and parents to ensure a good learning environment and the smooth operation of the school disciplinary system. The Mount Temple mission statement underpins this Code. It states that:

***All of us are different, all of us are equal.***

*We respect this diversity. We work to create an environment in the school where all members of the school community feel safe and protected, and enjoy learning, teaching, working and extra-curricular activities. We expect tolerance, politeness, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and their property.*

**Foundations of an Effective Code of Behaviour**

A fundamental principle is that respect for, and tolerance of all is an essential element of the code of behaviour. The code is also based on the belief that the provision of a wide curriculum will enable students to find subjects of relevance and interest to study.

Under existing legislation, there will be no differentiation in the application of this Code of Behaviour on the basis of gender, family status, marital status, religion, age, race, sexual orientation, disability, or membership of the travelling community...

In the application of this code of behaviour, whilst the first concern will be the student, it is necessary to recognise the need to balance the interests of the individual student with the overall safety and general welfare of all students and the rest of the school community; and recognises also the right to learn of all students in Mount Temple.

**Aims**

The Code of Behaviour assists in promoting good behaviour through:-

- (i) the provision of a safe and productive environment for teaching and learning for all;
- (ii) the efficient operation of a worthwhile, effective and stimulating learning programme for all students;
- (iii) the fostering of self-discipline and training in good behaviour patterns;
- (iv) the encouragement of personal responsibility;
- (v) the maintenance of good order throughout the school and respect for both school and personal property and for the environment;
- (vi) the involvement and co-operation of parents/guardians in supporting the code and the operation of sanctions;
- (vii) the understanding and acceptance of the rules governing behaviour within the school;
- (viii) the recognition and acceptance of the diversity of persons in the school community;

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

The vast majority of our students are hard-working and well behaved and it is our policy to applaud and affirm this positive behaviour. Towards this end Mount Temple has a range of initiatives to encourage and acknowledge hard work, commitment, leadership qualities, sporting skills and musical and artistic talent.

- Every opportunity is taken by Year Heads to commend publicly achievements by students within the year group
- Classroom teachers are encouraged to affirm good behaviour both verbally and to use the student's journal as vehicles for communicating 'good news' to parents.
- Regular extended roll call is used to reinforce school expectations with regard to behaviour.
- A monthly focus of various aspects of the general standards of behaviour expected is used to remind students of these expectations. -
- The use of Commendation Slips is encouraged to commend exceptional work, improvement or other student achievements.
- The use of VSware to record Positive Behaviour Incidences.
- The use of other award certificates such as Student of the Month Awards is encouraged to promote positive behaviour.
- The Mentor System is used as a model and reward for good behaviour.
- The public address system is used to commend student achievements.
- The School Sports Awards are held annually to commend students on sporting achievements.
- Regular student concerts/ musicals/plays and art exhibitions are run by teachers which promote the arts in the school and encourage peer support and acclaim for excellence.
- The Eye of the Clock awards at the end of the academic year promotes contribution to school life and positive behaviour.

### **Standards of Behaviour**

Students and staff should treat each other with respect, good manners and courtesy at all times. They should address each other politely and refrain from the use of bad language. Harassment in any form, including bullying and sexual harassment, between members of the community is specifically prohibited.

Students should behave in an orderly manner at all times. They should at all times protect the good name of the school and not bring the school into disrepute through misbehaviour in public places. Courtesy and consideration towards others should always be shown. Students should walk through corridors and between buildings and avoid creating a disturbance or excessive noise. Damage to any property of the school community is inconsiderate and is dealt with as a serious offence. Students must not enter a classroom until a teacher is present or unless instructed to do so by a member of staff.

In order to obtain the optimum benefit, students are expected to participate actively in the education process. They should attend classes on time, with all appropriate books and materials for the lesson in question. Homework assignments should be completed on time and to the best of the student's ability. Written work should be presented neatly, and in accordance with the specific instructions of each teacher.

The environment in the classroom should be one in which there is a balance between an open communication amongst students and teacher, and a disciplined atmosphere in which maximum learning can take place. However, the teacher may limit the level of debate and discussion to ensure that the objectives of the lesson are achieved. Teachers should refer to the Classroom management procedures

### **Specialist rooms**

When in specialist rooms such as practical workshops, science laboratories, home economic kitchens or the gymnasium, due regard must be shown by students for rules and safety procedures required by members of staff. These will be explained to students by staff at the beginning of such a practical course.

### **P.E Programme**

It is school policy that students participate in Physical Education classes, unless excused on medical grounds supported by a medical certificate. Parents who wish to have their children temporarily excused from P.E. must submit such a request in writing in the journal to the P.E. teacher, outlining the reasons. This request must be shown by the student to the member of the P.E. staff at the start of the P.E. class concerned. The student will be directed to sit and watch the class in action.

### **SEN Students**

Mount Temple is an inclusive school and as such many of our students have special educational needs. The SEN co-ordinator for each group will go through the Behaviour Code, Dress Code and school rules with their year group at the beginning of each academic year in a way that is accessible to them, reinforcing rationale and expectations. In the event of a serious breach of discipline involving an SEN student, in particular students with ADHD, EBD and Aspergers Syndrome their coordinators will be consulted before any decisions are made or sanctions imposed. The SEN coordinator may, in certain cases, act as an advocate in support of the student with SEN. To avoid conflict and to better understand their students teachers, must inform themselves of any specific problem of SEN students in their class and observe the recommendations of the SEN Department in this respect. (see Mount Temple Special Needs Policy)

### **Attendance, Punctuality and Absence**

Daily attendance at school is the norm expected of all students. All students should acquire good habits of punctuality and should arrive in school in good time each morning. It is expected that parents will co-operate with the school in ensuring that their children attend punctually and regularly. By law, a proper written explanation must be provided without delay for unavoidable absences. This explanation must be provided by using the Absentee form on Mount Temple APP.

The school is obliged by law to forward details of all students with absences totalling 20 days or more in one school year to the Educational Welfare Office. Parents/guardians of students reported are notified when such a report has been made.

Where lateness occurs without adequate explanation, sanctions may be imposed, please see the School's Strategy of Attendance.

### **Permission to Leave School Premises**

All pupils must remain on the school premises during school hours unless they have special permission to leave. When teachers are unavoidably absent, every effort is made at short notice to arrange for substitution. When this is not possible, students in senior classes may be sent home early. Parents for whom this is not convenient may so inform the school at the beginning of term and arrangements will be made for the students concerned to remain in school until normal closing time.

Students who live close to the school may go home for lunch if they have received permission from the Deputy Principal. This permission is only granted on receipt of the completed form and on the strict understanding that the student concerned will go home for lunch and not remain in close proximity to the school grounds. Permission to go home may be given for designated days or everyday but once given it is assumed the student will be off the premises. Permission to go home for lunch may be withdrawn if the privilege is abused.

If a student has an appointment arranged during school-time their parent/guardian must complete the permission to leave form on the APP, before 8:30 am on the day of the appointment. When leaving or re-entering the premises, students must sign the appropriate book in the Main Office and leave by the main gate.

Students and parents/guardians should note that a student leaving the premises during school-time without permission, or failing to sign out, is a serious offence and will result in a detention automatically and may, if repeated, may result in a suspension for the student.

### **Student Illness or Injury**

Students who become ill or are injured during the day must notify the class teacher before reporting to Sick bay. No one may go home without receiving permission from the Sick Bay, or in the absence of the attendant, from their Year Head, or from the Deputy Principal. In every instance, the school will attempt to contact parents before a student is sent home. However, in an emergency, the school will take whatever action is deemed to be appropriate for the good of the student, and advise the parents as soon as possible.

In the event of an emergency which may require the services of an ambulance, the Principal, Deputy Principal or a member of the staff delegated to do so will assess the situation. In the event of an ambulance being summoned, contact will be made with a parent/guardian as soon as practicable and arrangements made for the parent/guardian to go directly to the hospital to meet the patient. An adult person designated by the Principal or Deputy Principal shall accompany the student in the ambulance.

### **School Trips, Outings and Behaviour Outside School**

When travelling to and from school, standards of good behaviour are expected. Failure to behave in an appropriate manner on public transport or in a manner liable to bring the name of the school into disrepute will be dealt with as a serious offence.

School trips are covered in the Trips Policy and students are expected to abide by this Code of Behaviour at all times.

When pupils and staff encounter each other off school premises, the customary mutual respect should be displayed by each greeting the other. Harassment of members of the school community by other members of the school community in venues outside of the school may be addressed using the appropriate school policy or by contacting and making a complaint to the Gardai.

Where conflict, whether verbal or physical, between students occurs outside of school time but the conflict affects relationships in school and may pose a threat to the welfare of students involved or to other students, the school will take appropriate steps to resolve the conflict. Similarly, although the use of mobile phones is restricted during school hours and social networking sites are blocked on school computers, inappropriate use of such electronic communication and social networking sites between students becomes the school's business when it affects the atmosphere in school and as such will be subject to serious sanctions. This may result in the temporary suspension of one or more of the persons involved, pending a resolution acceptable by the students and the school authorities.

**In sum, any behaviour outside school which brings the school into disrepute or undermines the values of the school will be treated as a serious breach of this policy and the effects of the behaviour on the school community will be taken into account in dealing with the behaviour.**

### **Property**

Members of the school community are reminded from time to time to respect the property of the school and the property of others. The school has an obligation to protect that property. Malicious damage to school property, or the placement of graffiti, may result in the student responsible, or his/her parents, being responsible for the financial cost of replacement or restitution.

Pupils are generally responsible for the safety of their own property. When participating in P.E. or sport, students are advised to place any valuables in the possession of the teacher/coach for safe-keeping as the school will not take responsibility for such items if stolen from the changing areas. Should students suffer a loss of property through no fault of their own, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal and a claim form completed, signed by the appropriate persons and handed in to the Principal. Theft of, or damage to, personal property is always investigated as thoroughly as possible and those found responsible given appropriate sanctions.

In the interest of the general body of the school community, it may be necessary at times to search a student locker or property during the investigation of a particular issue – for example, theft or substance abuse.

Students are entitled to the same personal rights, right of privacy and defence of human dignity as anyone else. Accordingly, a search of the school-bag or locker of a particular student may only be undertaken if (i) the Principal, or in the absence of the Principal the Deputy Principal or senior member of staff, determines there is sufficient evidence to suggest the person may be responsible for theft of property, possession of a dangerous weapon or possession of illegal substance, and (ii) permission is obtained from a parent/guardian to institute such a search in the absence of the parent/guardian, or the parent/guardian has indicated a wish to be present when the search is instigated, and (iii) another person of authority (e.g. parent, member of staff) is present.

### **School Rules (Appended to the Code of Behaviour)**

School rules are drawn up in accordance with the aims of the code of behaviour to facilitate the day-to-day operation of the school. They may be revised from time to time as the need arises. At the start of each school year, the rules in operation for the school year are printed in the student journal and an agreement to abide by said rules is signed by student and parent/guardian.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians**

The support and co-operation of parents and guardians are **essential** to the effective operation of the code of behaviour. When teachers and parents/ guardians are not working together, students inevitably suffer.

Parents/Guardians and students are required at the beginning of each new school year to confirm in writing that they have read and agree to abide by the school rules, code of behaviour, code of classroom behaviour and dress code. On the part of the school, it is policy to keep parents informed before problems escalate. Parents are invited to keep closely in touch with the Year Head regarding all aspects of the children's progress in school. Parents/Guardians wishing to consult with members of staff should do so by means of a pre-arranged appointment at a mutually convenient time.

### **Sanctions and punishments (see Appendix 1)**

Sanctions may be imposed on any student who offends against the rules of the school, the dress code or is involved in abuse of substances on school property or on school related activities. Such substances include alcohol, illegal drugs and other substances deemed to be potentially dangerous. The carrying of offensive weapons, including knives of any description, is expressly forbidden. Students whose behaviour in the classroom is disruptive of the learning of others will be disciplined.

### **Communication**

Communication from class teachers with parents should be verbal, or by way of, report forms or letters. Form teachers may phone/text parents/guardians. Written records of all instances of serious misbehaviour are kept and students notified when such records relating to them are being kept.

Records should also be kept of improvement in behaviour of previously disruptive students. Teachers keep Form Teachers/Year Head and the Deputy Principal informed through Behaviour Reporting on Vsware, When necessary, problems are discussed with the Deputy Principal and/or Principal.

In cases of serious or disruptive misbehaviour, or behaviour which is a threat to others, a student may be temporarily excluded from school until such time as student, parents/guardians and one or more of Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal, should meet. In such circumstances, a written undertaking will be required from the student and agreed by parents, that their work, behaviour etc. will conform to the codes currently in place. No student will be sent from school during the school day without prior contact with parents/guardians.

In cases of substance abuse, the appropriate policy will apply. There are separate school policies in relation to the possession and use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal substances. Vaping is treated in the same manner as use of tobacco.

### **Exclusion of Students from School**

Suspension from school for a limited period of time, usually a maximum of 3 days, is a punishment generally reserved for cases where other sanctions have already been applied, yet misbehaviour persists, or for cases of serious misbehaviour or where a student poses a threat to others by his/her continued presence in the school. Pupils may only be suspended by decision of the Principal, or in the absence of the Principal, by the Deputy Principal. Such a suspension follows consultation with the appropriate Year head and the Principal or Deputy Principal. No student will be sent from school during the school day without prior contact with parents.

A suspension will terminate following a meeting of student, parent and Principal/Deputy Principal provided a satisfactory undertaking is given about the future conduct of the student. All cases of suspension must be brought to the attention of the Board of Management. In serious cases of breaches of discipline, the student may not be permitted to return to school pending a decision made by the Board of Management.

A student whose behaviour threatens the safety and welfare of others or whose serious misbehaviour continues to contravene the Codes of Behaviour, classroom behaviour or Dress code, shall be liable to expulsion by the Board of Management. The expulsion will normally follow on a suspension and a meeting of student, parents/guardians and Principal. In cases of expulsion, parents/guardians have the right to appeal the decision and present their case, in the first instance to the Board of Management, and then by following the approved appeal procedure as set down in the relevant documents.

In the event of a student being expelled from the school, the Principal, as stated in the Education Act, will endeavour to support parents/guardians to find an alternative school in which the student may continue his/her education.

### **REVIEW**

The Codes of Behaviour, dress and classroom behaviour are subject to regular review and updating, as necessary. The Board of Management welcomes views as to how these codes may be improved.

## **Appendix 1: Breaches and Measures**

### **Minor Breaches of School Discipline**

Minor breaches of discipline may include the following (*please note these lists are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive*):

Failure to submit homework assignments.

Breaching school Dress Code.

Failure to bring necessary equipment to class.

Minor rough behaviour in class, corridors or canteen.

Minor disruption of class, e.g. speaking out of turn or talking during class.

Writing on desks or classroom walls.

Arriving late to class.

Using mobile phones in class.

Littering the school, canteen or grounds.

The use of bad language amongst students.

### **Measures to be taken**

Measures to be taken for minor breaches of discipline may include the following:

Misconduct will be dealt with by the classroom teacher in the first instance.

A verbal warning should be issued to student.

A student may be moved in the classroom seating arrangement

A note may be sent home to parents to be signed by both parent and form-teacher.

Repeated incidences should be logged as a Behaviour Report on Vsware.

Detention during breaks by classroom teacher. (Detention after school requires a one day notice given in writing to student, or contact made with the parent prior to detention.)

Extra written work.

Cleaning/ litter duties in classroom or grounds.

### **More Serious Breaches of Discipline**

Serious Breaches of School Discipline may include the following:

Repeated minor breaches of discipline.

Repeated minor breaches of Covid Response plan

Showing disrespect to staff members including the use of bad language.

Failure to attend Detention.

Any form of bullying behaviour towards others including texting or using social media.

Theft.

Forging Parent/Guardian's signature.

Failure to attend classes without permission.

Damage to the property of others or the school, particularly School Safety Equipment.

Bad behaviour on public transport likely to bring the school's good name into disrepute.

Serious disruption of classes and interference with the education of fellow students.

Behaviour which is a threat to others.

The carrying of offensive weapons

### **Measures to be Taken**

Measures to be taken may include the following:

Report sent to Form Teacher.

Student may go on a Daily Report to closely monitor behaviour.

Referral to Year Head.

Referral to Guidance Counsellor

Immediate Wednesday Detention given

Phone call home to Parents/Guardians.

Invitation to school to Parents/Guardian.

Withdrawal of school privileges such as leaving the school at lunch-time, representing the school etc.

Other suitable interventions designed to modify specific behaviours

Temporary removal from class in extreme cases.

Suspension from school

Exclusion from school

**Signed**

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_