



SUSPENSION POLICY

Meán Scoil Mhuire Longford

Chairperson: Mr. Joe Finnegan

Principal: Mrs. Aoife Mulrennan

Date: 17th January 2017

Suspension Policy

Rationale

This policy has been reviewed in the context of the Code of Behaviour of Meán Scoil Mhuire, Longford. The development of this policy has been grounded in the principles of Justice, Equality and Impartiality and guided by the CEIST ethos that permeates our school.

All students and teachers have the right to be treated fairly, impartially and with dignity, in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

The School Code of Behaviour specifies the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by students registered at this school. When a student fails or refuses to observe these standards, discipline options under the Code of Behaviour will be applied.

Support will be provided for students experiencing difficulties from the following services:

- Guidance Counsellor
- Class tutor
- Year Head
- Referral to outside agencies (if deemed necessary) N.E.P.S, H.S.E. Community Services, National Behaviour Support Services, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, G.P.
- Juvenile Liaison Officer.

In cases of continual unacceptable behaviour, or isolated incidents of a serious nature a student may be removed temporarily from the school for a period of time that reflects the seriousness of the incident. (Ref. Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy)

Procedure

Following a reported incident of unacceptable behaviour

1. The student will meet with the Principal and Deputy Principal to discuss the matter.
2. The Principal/Deputy Principal will investigate the incident thoroughly.
3. The Disciplinary Council (Principal, Deputy Principal and one other staff member, ideally the Guidance Counsellor or Year Head) will meet following the investigation and a decision to suspend or not will be issued.

4. The Principal may suspend a student for up to three days. In unusual circumstances, such as the need to call an emergency Board of Management meeting, the Principal may suspend a student for a maximum of five school days.
5. Parents/guardians will be initially informed of the incident and the decision of the Disciplinary Council by telephone. The decision will then be issued formally in writing.
6. Where a child of a member of the Disciplinary Committee or Board of Management is involved in an incident which might warrant suspension, the parent/guardian will absent themselves from the decision making process.
7. The Education Welfare Board will be notified if the suspension is longer than 6 days and/or that the student has been suspended for more than 20 days during that academic year.

Letter of Notification

This letter will include:

1. The effective date of and duration of the suspension.
2. Notification that the student, on his/her return to the school, must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. A meeting will take place between the parent/guardian, the Principal and or Deputy Principal and the student, to support the student in their re-integration into school.
3. A student will not be readmitted until a parent/guardian meets with the Principal and or Deputy Principal.

Immediate Suspension Procedures

- Where the continued presence of a student in the school would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff, immediate suspension may be necessary.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately to remove the student from the school. A thorough investigation will then be conducted as outlined in the procedures.
- If a parent/guardian is not available to collect the student, he/she will be supervised until suspension takes effect.

A student will not be sent home during the school day unless collected by a parent/guardian or a responsible adult nominated by the parent/guardian.

Behaviours that lead to immediate suspension

The following behaviour will incur automatic suspension:

- Leaving school grounds without permission from a teacher during the school day.
- Smoking on school property
- Using/carrying/distributing banned substances (as outlined in Code of Behaviour and Substance Abuse Policy)
- Possession of a weapon.
- Serious physical assault of another member of the school community.
- Offensive language used in class or towards another member of the school community.
- Serious disruption of teaching and learning.
- Intimidation of any member of the school community.

Appeals

The parents/guardians of the student or in the case of a student, who has reached the age of 18, may appeal the suspension in writing to the Board of Management of the school. Where the total number of days for which the student has being suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over 18 years may appeal the suspension to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The students may **not** return to school while an appeal is in progress.

The parent or student will be given an opportunity to meet with the Board of Management if they wish, in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The Principal of the school will inform the Parents in writing of the outcome of the appeal.

If the appeal is successful the student may return to school having fulfilled requirements set by the school.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

The Principal/Board may agree that another sanction may replace the suspension after discussion with the parents/guardians if new circumstances come to light.

Period of Suspension

The Principal of Meán Scoil Mhuire may impose a suspension of up to three days (or five in the case of an emergency) as approved by the Board of Management. In the absence of the Principal, the Board of Management have authorised the Deputy Principal with the powers of suspension.

The school will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice