



Educate  
Together



## Behaviour Code of ETSS Wicklow

*School Address: Crinion Park, Wicklow Town*

*Roll number: 68345R*

*School Patron/s: Educate Together*

### INTRODUCTION

ETSSW is an inclusive, equality-based school operating under the patronage trusteeship of Educate Together. The school is governed by the ethos set out in the Educate Together Blueprint for secondary schools. The Blueprint sets out the core values of an Educate Together school as co-educational, democratically run, child-centred and equality-based. ETSSW strives to create a safe and happy school environment promoting inclusion, honesty, dignity and respect. We want to inspire all of our students to pursue excellence both academically and in the interests they follow.

The mission statement of ETSSW is:

We are a school where students grow in diversity and democracy, as independent thinkers and lifelong learners, as citizens promoting dignity and fairness for all.

Our goal is to develop a sense of pride in the school and a strong sense of identification with what we stand for in terms of our values. This code of behaviour is designed to help us achieve these goals. – In ETSSW, we believe in creating a caring environment. This Behaviour Code has been developed by all school partners (students, parents/guardians, staff, Board).

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS BEHAVIOUR CODE

- To provide a framework where the principles of fairness and natural justice apply;
- To ensure the efficient operation of the school;
- To promote respect for each individual and for the school environment;
- To encourage self-discipline in students, encouraging them to show consideration, respect and tolerance towards others;
- To promote interpersonal skills which help students work co-operatively and give them the ability to solve problems and resolve conflict;
- To support the school's classroom code by developing negotiated charters;

- To provide clarity to everyone in the school community regarding the standards of behaviour expected by the school;
- To help students recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others;
- To help students to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences;
- To help students to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour;
- To keep the student and/or other students safe. (To keep all students safe?)

***THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR IS CONNECTED TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES:***

- Negotiated Charters
- The School Rules
- The Child Protection Policy
- The Child Safety Statement
- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Substance Use Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

***PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE***

ETSS Wicklow is committed to fair procedures:

In the case of investigations into alleged breaches of the code, every student will have:

- (a) **the right to be heard:** this includes the right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated and to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account. The student must know how the issue will be decided and have the right to respond to any allegations. In situations where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the student has the right to be heard by the decision-making body.
- (b) **the right to impartiality:** Freedom from bias entails ensuring that a person with an interest in the matter is not involved in the investigation or decision-making. If a person has pre-conceived opinions, a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter, they should not attempt to settle that matter. An impartial process is one that allows a decision to be made based on an unbiased evaluation of information and evidence.

## **BEHAVIOUR CODE PROVISIONS**

### **1.0 School Values:**

We ask all staff members and parents to model politeness, courtesy and respect in their interactions in the school community and we expect a strong standard of loyalty from all school partners to our school values. Our school values apply at all times – in school, out of school activities, arriving to school, returning home and in all electronic communications.

### **1.1 Each student is expected to:**

- Work to the best of his/her ability.
- Be guided by the advice and help of the staff and management
- Show courtesy and respect to others as persons in their own right and as members of the school community both in and outside of school.
- Show care and respect for his/her own property and that of others.

- Respect the rights of others to grow up in a caring environment where they can reach their full potential.
- Show respect for themselves and others
- Show kindness to others
- Be fair
- Show forgiveness
- Attend school regularly and be punctual
- Look for respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Have a good attendance record
- Have all necessary materials for each class
- Do their best in class and work to the highest standards
- Take responsibility for their work
- Help to create a safe and positive environment
- Participate in school activities
- Leave classrooms tidy
- Show personal responsibility

## 1.2 Promotion of a positive learning environment:

ETSSW promotes self-discipline and a positive learning environment through encouraging and rewarding positive behaviour. This positive school environment is created by:

- Setting high expectations for student behaviour
- Praise and affirmation in daily school life
- Nurturing students as leaders
- Encouraging a happy school atmosphere
- Establishing class routines
- Providing positive feedback about behaviour
- Communicating with parents/guardians
- Regular school reports
- Meetings with class groups and year groups
- Celebrating with **Awards Night** in May
- School publications
- School website
- Celebrating student work through displays
- Provision of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
- The creation of a negotiated charters for classes
- Students working to the best of their ability at all times
- Students having appropriate clothing and footwear, indoor and outdoor, for Physical Education classes
- **Rewards good behaviour:**
  - (a) Positive comments by teachers
  - (b) Notes home in the journal.
  - (c) A phone call home to parents recognising students' efforts.
  - (d) Fun events in school e.g. quizzes, cake Friday, etc.
  - (e) Certificates recognising students' endeavours e.g. student of the month.
  - (f) Extra-curricular activities and trips.
  - (g) End of term celebrations.

### 1.3 Role of parents/guardians

Parents/guardians are responsible for emphasising at home the need for good behaviour and for supporting the school's efforts to create and maintain a school climate where effective learning and teaching can take place.

### 1.4 Role of the subject teacher:

ETSSW encourages good relationships between staff and students. Teachers bring their professional abilities as teachers and classroom managers and promote learning and positive behaviour within the school community.

Breaches of discipline such as hindering teaching and learning, failure to do homework or bring the correct resources and arriving late for class are primarily dealt with by the teacher.

In dealing with such issues the teacher may employ strategies from the following range of options:

- Discussing the situation within the context of the negotiated charter
- Move the disruptive pupil to another seating position
- Extra work
- Contact parents/guardians
- Detain with prior notice given to parents/guardians (Teacher Detention) – giving appropriate work/study with an educational basis for the period of detention
- Liaise with other staff as appropriate i.e. Deputy Principal, Principal

**Note:** *Persistent minor breaches of this code of behaviour will amount to a serious breach in Code of Behaviour in due course and will be referred to management.*

### 1.5 Role of the Deputy Principal:

The role of the Deputy Principal, in conjunction with subject teachers and the Principal, is to coordinate the implementation of the **Code of Behaviour**; specifically:

- Liaise with the subject teacher in dealing with persistent minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour, or with serious breaches.
- Interview the student and make recommendations.
- Request regular reports from subject teachers.
- Meet parents/guardians when this is necessary.
- Put student on progress reports.
- Detain with prior notice given to parents/guardians – giving appropriate work/study with an educational basis for the period of detention.
- Draw up a contract with the student.
- Create an individual plan with a core team of teachers working with the student concerned.
- Consult and inform the Principal on serious behaviour issues.
- The Deputy Principal may, with the parents'/guardians' permission, refer the student to counselling or to an outside agency if deemed appropriate as a means of supporting the student before sanctions are applied.
- Meet with Parents/Guardians/Support Services as required.

## 1.6 Role of the Principal:

The role of the Principal is to coordinate the implementation of the Code of Behaviour, specifically:

- Provide support and advice to the Deputy Principal and subject teachers.
- In consultation with the Deputy Principal, take a lead role in resolving serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour, when appropriate.
- Consult and inform the Deputy Principal about serious behaviour issues.
- Meet with Parents/Guardians/Support Services as required.
- The Principal may, with the parents'/guardians' permission, refer the student to counselling or to an outside agency if this is deemed an appropriate means of supporting the student before sanctions are applied.
- Lead the consultation process in the periodic review and development of the Code of Behaviour including students, parents/guardians and staff, under the direction of the Board of Management.

## 2.0 Unacceptable Behaviour at ETSSW

- *Behaviour that is hurtful and/or harmful (including bullying in all its forms, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)*
- *Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning*
- *Threats to another person or people or their property*
- *Physical hurt to others /behaviour that compromises the psychological and/or physical safety of others*
- *Damage to property*
- *Theft*

## 2.1 Levels of intervention

Students are given clear guidance on classroom rules and behaviour. Accordingly, minor misbehaviour is dealt with by the class teacher. The school and teaching staff implement an agreed approach to classroom management.

### ***Range of Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour***

- *Verbal reprimands*
- *Additional written tasks (must have educational value)*
- *Removal from the group activity to individual task (within a class group)*
- *Withdrawal of privileges*
- *Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group*
- *An individual programme for a specified period of time*
- *Carrying out a useful task in the school*
- *detention*
- *Formal report to the Board of Management*
- *Suspension*
- *Expulsion*

### ***Strategies employed to assist students in moving towards better behaviour:***

- Phoning parents/guardians
- Meeting parents/guardians
- Put on progress report for one week (or longer if necessary)

- Development of individual behaviour plans
- Behaviour plans for class (if issue is a class group matter)
- Regular meetings allowing opportunities to acknowledge improvements
- Working with the restorative approach when appropriate (see Appendix 1)

***For students who fail to respond to the Code of Behaviour or who show particularly challenging behaviour:***

- The Principal and staff may call on a counselling team and NEPS (National Educational Psychological Services), and/or external counselling services and supports
- The school may seek a psychological report on students if needed and liaise with SEN (Special Educational Needs) staff at the school
- Once these interventions are exhausted and the school can no longer facilitate the needs of the student, the case will be referred to the Board of Management

**2.2 Attendance and Punctuality:**

- Regular attendance is expected and encouraged
- The school authorities have the discretion to allow for extenuating circumstances that have negatively affected attendance and punctuality
- If a pupil is going to be absent for the day, families are asked to phone/email the school at the earliest opportunity on the day . If no explanation has been received by 10.00, the school may make contact by SMS and/or phone. At the latest, the student must provide a written note on return as provided for in the Homework Journal – confidential information can be communicated directly to the Deputy Principal by sealed letter or by telephone or by contact with the school office [reception@etswicklow.ie](mailto:reception@etswicklow.ie)
- In the case of long-term absences, parents/guardians should notify the Deputy Principal by telephone or in writing
- The school is to be informed of medical and dental appointments at least one day in advance
- Students may normally use the toilets before 08.30 and at break times (morning break and lunch time) – students with a medical condition will be allowed to use toilets as required, but the general rule is that permission for visits to the toilets between breaks will be a matter for the teachers to decide
- Students out of class during lessons must have their journal signed and timed by the relevant staff member
- Truancy is not tolerated and is seen as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour

***Sanctions***

- Students who persistently fail to produce written notes will be referred to the Deputy Principal for sanction
- Students who arrive late on four occasions in a term will receive a detention - if the situation persists, further sanctions such as subsequent detentions/suspensions/appointments to discuss the situation with the Board will be considered
- If there is no improvement in punctuality, parents/guardians will be required to attend at the school to discuss the matter
- Any form of truancy is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and is dealt with by the Deputy Principal, referred to the Principal and requires the student's parents/guardians to attend at the school

**2.3 Care of the School:**

ETSSW is a Green School and we expect to work in a pleasant environment, free from litter and graffiti. Everyone shares a responsibility for maintaining a clean and safe environment.

- Chewing gum is not allowed anywhere on school property.
- Littering or graffiti are not acceptable.
- Students are expected to respect the property of others and school property, including lockers.
- Deliberate vandalism of school or student property is deemed a serious offence.

### **Sanctions**

- Students will be required to make good any damage done to school property or to the property of other students.
- Students may also be asked to perform tasks in the school appropriate to resolving the misbehaviour (e.g. cleaning graffiti)

## **2.4 Health and Safety:**

School is a place of safety for all. Everyone is encouraged to participate in creating awareness of health and safety issues within the school and at school activities away from the school.

- All forms of bullying are unacceptable and should be reported to a member of staff as per anti-bullying policy;
- Safety notices are posted around the school buildings and should be adhered to at all times. Students are expected to be aware of these notices;
- Students are required to follow all safety instructions given by teaching or non-teaching staff;
- Students must pay attention to and obey all safety regulations. Science, PE, Art, Home Economics and lunch time sports activities all require a high level of awareness of safety;
- Interference with fire-fighting or any safety equipment, or any action that leads to the evacuation of the school is treated as a serious offence;
- The possession, use or consumption of alcohol or of non-prescribed drugs is forbidden at all times;
- Cycling on the school grounds is forbidden, unless it is part of a curricular or co-curricular activity.
- Any behaviour which endangers the health and safety of any members of the school community is treated with the upmost seriousness by management and the Board of Management.
- Any usage of the internet, digital media or mobile phone which intrudes on the privacy and dignity of staff, students or their families is deemed a serious breach of the school Code of Behaviour and/or Anti-bullying Policy. Students are reminded that the posting of offensive material may result in the victim taking a legal case against the person who posted the material and/or the person(s) who control the account/site.

## **3.0 Detention:**

A teacher detention is a sanction applied by subject teachers for minor breaches of the **Code of Behaviour** or for incidents of a more serious nature. A Management Detention is a sanction applied by the Deputy Principal for serious issues of misbehaviour which have not yet been resolved and which have been referred by a subject teacher.

In the case of Teacher or Management Detention, a standard form is sent to the parents/guardians outlining the following information:

- The reason for the detention.
- The date, time and location of detention.
- Work set for the detention.
- The signature of a parent/guardian is required.

Students who arrive late for school will have their journal stamped and will be given detention on the fourth occasion.

**Note:** failure to attend detention without a satisfactory explanation is deemed a serious offence.

#### **4.0 Suspension:**

Grounds for suspension are:

- Disruption to the learning of others or the teaching process.
- Threatening the safety of others (e.g. the student has kicked or punched another student)
- Causing serious damage to property or theft of property.
- Bringing the reputation of the school into disrepute.
- Truancy, including leaving the school grounds without permission.
- Showing disrespect to a member of the school community
- Inappropriate use of any social media or internet site.

(Note: This is not an exhaustive list)

ETSSW is required by law to follow fair procedures (TUSLA guidelines).

#### **4.1 Suspension Procedures:**

- The Principal or the Deputy-Principal in the absence of the Principal, has the authority to suspend a student. This sanction should be imposed with reference to the Code of Behaviour policy and to the specific incident.
- Where an assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:
  - (a) inform the student about the complaint and give an opportunity to respond.
  - (b) Inform parents by telephone and give an opportunity to respond.
  - (c) meet with parents and student to explore the matter further to provide the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for modifying the sanction and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the student's behaviour.
- Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted, parents will be notified and arrangements made for the student to be collected.



- The Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) will be informed if the suspension is for six or more school days or if the student has been suspended for an aggregate of twenty or more days in the school year.

#### **4.2 Period and Type of Suspension:**

In imposing a suspension and in deciding its duration, the following factors will be considered:

- (a) The seriousness of the breach/breaches of school regulations.
- (b) The severity of the behaviour, the frequency and the likelihood of its recurring.
- (c) The behaviour of the student up to the time of suspension.
- (d) previous interventions.
- (e) The age, state of health and special needs of the student.
- (f) The possible negative impact of the student's behaviour on other students in the school.

#### **4.3 Implementing the Suspension:**

- The parents/guardians of a student being suspended will be contacted by telephone and an appointment made with the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- At this meeting the Principal/Deputy Principal will discuss with the student and parents/guardians:

- (a) The reason(s) for suspension.
- (b) The length and dates of the suspension.
- (c) The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- (d) The expectations of the student while on suspension.
- (e) A statement of the importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter including any commitments to be entered into by the student.
- (f) Arrangements for the return of the student to school.

- During the period of suspension, a student is not permitted to enter the school premises without prior permission nor is a student permitted to hang around in the vicinity of the school premises. The suspension may be lifted temporarily to facilitate a student to participate in a State Examination or make a scheduled check in visit to the school.
- The student upon his/her return to school will be required to report to the Principal/Deputy Principal before being permitted to go to class.

#### **4.4 Grounds for removing a suspension:**

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

#### 4.5 Appeal:

- Parents/guardians (and students aged 18 years or more) may appeal the decision to suspend to the Board of Management. They should furnish the Board in writing with full details of the appeal.
- If the parents/guardians are not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Management, they may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills under *Section 29 of the Education Act 1998*. Such an appeal regarding suspension can only be made where the suspension period brings the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or more in any one school year.
- The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

#### 5.0 Expulsion:

- Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion) is a sanction reserved for use in the most extreme cases of indiscipline or in serious cases of misbehaviour as determined by the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. A student is expelled when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him from the school, having complied with the provisions of *Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.
- Expulsion is the ultimate sanction available to the school. ***The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension.*** Factors such as the degree of seriousness of a particular incident or the persistence of a behaviour or failure on the part of the student to change a behaviour following other interventions. Other considerations are the effect on other members of the school community and/or the good name of ETSSW.
- The sanction of expulsion will be exercised by the Board of Management only in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour such as:
  - (a) The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
  - (b) The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety to others.
  - (c) The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
  - (d) The student is responsible for serious physical, emotional or psychological damage to a member or members of the school community, including staff and students.
  - (e) The student persistently fails to adhere to the Code of Behaviour .
  - (f) The Board of Management reserves the right to expel a student for a first offence. The list below is an example but not exhaustive of the behaviour that may result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the Code of Behaviour:
    - A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
    - Actual violence or physical assault.
    - Possession of or supplying illegal drugs.
    - Behaviour, both in school and 'out of school', that brings the name of the school into disrepute.

## **5.1 Expulsion Procedures:**

- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- Parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Both parents/guardians and students will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour.
- Where expulsion may result from an investigation and a meeting with the student and their parents/guardians has been arranged, it provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for modifying the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the student's behaviour.
- If a student and his/her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parents/guardians and their response.
- Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion and ensure that parents have records of the allegations against the student; provide written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion; notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing; ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing; advise parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.

## **5.2 Review of Expulsion Cases:**

The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

The Board of Management will consider the Principal's recommendation. If the Board decides to consider expelling the student it will hold a hearing.

The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.

The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student.

Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing:

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24(1)*).
- The Board of Management will not effect exclusion within 20 days of the Educational Welfare Board being notified. Suspension may be applied for this period.
- The Board will communicate its decision in writing to the parents and outline the next phase of the process involving the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Following the twenty-day notification period and intervention of the Educational Welfare Officer, and where the Board remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel in writing.
- Parents/guardians and the student will be informed of the right to appeal under the *Education Act 1998 Section 29* and supplied with the standard form.

### **5.3 Section 29 Appeals:**

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 Skills (*Education Act 1998 Section 29*). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

### **5.4 Review of use of expulsion:**

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

### **6.0 School Records**

Information relating to students is kept in a secure location in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

### **7.0 Review and evaluation of Code of Behaviour**

The next review: **Academic Year 2021-2022**