POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY / CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

MERCY COLLEGE SLIGO

BOM RATIFIED

Mission Statement

Mercy College is an all-girls Voluntary Catholic Secondary school with a co-educational Aonad under the trusteeship of CEIST. Mercy College is dedicated to the provision of quality Catholic education, academic, spiritual, global, moral, physical, social, aesthetic and vocational which will enable students to achieve their maximum potential in a caring and nurturing environment.

Mercy College believes that its Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Behaviour is firmly rooted in Christian values, mutual respect, justice, the common good and concern for health and safety.

An essential element of this is good, open communication between the partners. The School believes that such an approach will be beneficial for students, teachers, management, parents/guardians and the Board of Management alike. It should also encourage students to take a positive view of co-operation and interdependence into their adult lives. The Positive Behaviour Policy will have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all the parties concerned within the school.

All the students attending Mercy College are actively encouraged to make a positive impact on the school community through positive behaviour. In our School, positive behaviour is considered to be a form of training, which empowers students to make appropriate choices in a supportive environment.

Praise and positive consequences are seen as more important by the teachers in maintaining a good relationship with students than punishment and negative consequences.

<u>Suggestions by teachers to promote Positive Behaviour</u>

- Positive written comments in official school journal
- Verbal praise from teacher or tutor
- Affirmation of student's self-esteem and self-worth
- Record system showing progress as well as high grades
- Complimenting good behaviour, initiative, courtesy, neat appearance, etc
- Praise for progress as well as achievement
- "Catching" people doing something good or helping someone else
- Agreeing rewards with students or class for better effort or better behaviour- a quiz, an outing, a discussion, lunch time DVD or music, etc.

  A formal school-based award scheme
  Belonging Plus Programme

Code of Behaviour

Guidelines

The standard expected with regard to any issue not covered below is that which people would regard as decent and reasonable behaviour.

All students of Mercy College are expected:

(1) to be in attendance every day; they are likewise expected to be in their classhall in time for the commencement of each class.

(2) to strive for academic excellence (i.e., students will always try to do their best at classwork and at homework).

(3) to be properly prepared for each subject and each class.

(4) to wear full school uniform and also to be groomed in accordance with school guidelines.

(5) to show courtesy manners and respect to people (students, staff, visitors, etc.) at all times and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority.

(6) to respect school property and the property of others and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

(7) to eat/drink only in designated areas and only at allocated times and to refrain entirely from using 'chewing-gum'.

(8) to observe the law relating to smoking and illicit drugs and substances.

(9) to have their mobile phones 'powered-off' and out of sight. Other electronic devices, such as ear-phones, MP3 players, I-pods, etc. must be kept in students bag or locker.

(1) All students of Mercy College are expected to be in attendance every day; they are likewise expected to be in their class hall in time for the commencement of each class.

This means:
You are expected to be on time for school each day and to be on time for each class throughout the school-day.
You provide a note from your parents / guardian explaining any unavoidable absences.

Because:
- it is difficult for a student to 'catch-up' on topics taught in class while he 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) All students of Mercy College are expected to strive for academic excellence (i.e., students will always try to do their best at classwork and at homework).

This means:
You retain the 'Official School Journal' to record homework.
You do (written and non-written) homework every night.
You listen to teachers, obey class procedures and ensure your behaviour never disrupts the learning of others.

Because:
- 'The Journal' is also used by teachers to record comments: it is examined and signed weekly by class tutors 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.

(3) All students of Mercy College are expected to be properly prepared for each subject and each class.

This means:
You have the proper pens, pencils, copies, textbooks, materials, etc. as told to you by your teacher.
You have any special equipment needed for particular subjects; e.g. P.E. gear, drawing equipment, etc.

You can access your locker only at the following times; (i) before 1st class, (ii) during 'little-break', and (iii) during 'big-break' ; at these times you bring all the materials needed for the 3-classes that follow ensuring you are at class on time.

Because:
- full and proper participation in class is not possible without necessary materials.
- a student is often easily distracted if he is in class without all necessary materials.
- class learning / teaching for others in the class is unfairly disrupted when a student arrives late for class.

(4) All students of Mercy College are expected to wear full school uniform and to be groomed in accordance with official school policy

This means:
You are expected to maintain the school's reputation and high standards by the manner in which 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 agreed by parents, students and school authorities,
- the uniform ensures all students are treated equally.

(5) All students of Mercy College are expected to show courtesy manners and respect to people (students, staff, visitors, etc.) at all times and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority

This means:
You are on the 'look-out-for' and you are supportive of your fellow student(s).
You avoid engaging in any form of bullying, intimidation or 'picking-on' other people.

You avoid arranging for others to bully, intimidate or 'pick-on' other people.
You avoid fighting and/or you will avoid arranging fights in the school or elsewhere.
When in the school building you will walk and also you will refrain from and help to prevent running, jostling, pushing, shoving, etc.
You extend courtesy, manners, and respect to all people.
You follow the instructions of teachers and others in authority without causing any disruption.

- These apply at all times including when you are in class, on the school premises, going to/from school, on school activities such as games, tours, debates, theatre visits, etc.

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.

(6) All students of Mercy College are expected to respect school property and the property of others and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

This means:
You 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.)

Because:

- improved standards of cleanliness reflects 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.

(7) All students of Mercy College are expected to eat/drink only in designated areas and only at allocated times and to refrain entirely from using 'chewing-gum'

This means:
You eat/drink only in designated areas and only at designated times.
You 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.

Because:

- eating/drinking other than in designated areas and at designated times causes disruption and the mess created often damages books, copies etc.
- when 'stuck' underneath desks, tables , chairs etc. chewing-gum is very un-hygienic
- significant additional expense is incurred when cleaning up food, drink and chewing-gum if consumed throughout the school building.

(8) All students of Mercy College are expected to observe the law relating to smoking and illicit drugs and substances.

This means:

You must refrain from smoking, consuming, possessing, supplying and / or arranging for the supply of cigarettes, alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances.

Because:

- it is against the law.
- the school grounds and buildings are a smoke-free zone
- of health, safety & moral issues; especially the potential for addiction, serious ill-health and death

(9) All students of Mercy College are expected to have their mobile phones 'powered-off' and out of sight. Other electronic devices, such as ear-phones, MP3 players, I-pods, etc. must be kept in the students bag or locker.

This means:

You are not allowed to use mobile phones in the school building.
You do not borrow some other person's mobile telephone and use it.

Because:

- mobile phones cause disruption.
- mobile phones can be used for intimidating, bullying or demeaning other people.
- the school telephone can be used for urgent communication with students.

PROCEDURES/ LADDER OF REFERRAL

Each teacher is responsible for maintaining a positive teaching and learning environment in his/her classroom and is expected to have a system to promote positive behaviour and also to have a system to deal with misbehaviour and breaches of class rules.

Each student is expected to contribute positively to the teaching and learning environment in every class.

Each teacher should insist on:

- Good timekeeping
- Order and respect for other and their property
- Homework being completed on time
- All students coming to class with all necessary books, copies etc
- No eating or drinking in class
- Mobile phones must be powered off and out of sight
- An atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning prevailing

Each teacher will encourage and promote positive behaviour by:

- Positive written comments in official school journal
- Verbal praise to students who are showing progress
- Complimenting good behaviour, initiative, courtesy, neat appearance, etc
- "Catching" students doing something good or helping someone else
- Agreeing rewards with students or class for better effort or better behaviour- a quiz, an outing, a discussion, lunch time DVD or music, etc.
- a formal school-organised 'awards ceremony'

STAGE 1

Student in breach of class rules

Action:

- Verbal warning stating that the behaviour is inappropriate and advises the student to make a sensible choice and return to task.

STAGE 2

Student continues to be in breach of class rules

Action:

- Student is given a second verbal warning
- Extra work assigned-this should be fair and reasonable
- Moving position in class (e.g. sitting at the front of the class)
- Teacher records the incident in the student's official school journal (and also in the teacher's own records)

STAGE 3

Student continues to be disruptive in class / More serious breach of the Code of Behaviour

Action:

- Class teacher records the incident in student's official school journal (and also in the teacher's own records)
- Penalty exercises assigned- this should be fair and reasonable
- Student may be sent to a designated teacher (to allow teaching and learning to continue)
- Class teacher break time detention / Solution focus Interview by class teacher with student
- Year Head will be notified via: 'Incident Sheet'

STAGE 4

Failure to turn up for class teacher's detention *or* further breaches of the Code of Behaviour *or* Concern form from class tutor (see appendix 1)

Action: Referral to Year Head via Concern Form from Tutor *or* Incident Sheets from class teachers

(i) Reflection form filled in by student and discussed with year head

- Explain incident(s)
- Suggest how to put things right
- Indicate how they will behave in future

(ii) Student Profile forms will be supplied by the Year Head to class teachers to be filled in relation to the particular student

(iii) School Detention (Weekday Detention / Saturday Detention)

(iv) Letter home from Year Head

(v) Penalty exercises *or/and* referral to Care Team (see appendix 2)

STAGE 5

Further breaches of school rules leading to further incident sheets

Action:

- School detention- Extended Detention
- Letter home from Year Head
- Student on Report Card
- Referral to Care Team

STAGE 6

Student continues to be disruptive and is in breach of school rules- leading to further incidents sheets

Action:

- Parents / Guardians required to attend a meeting with Year Head/Management
- The student may be put on in school suspension
- The student may be put on Weekday Detention' or 'Weekend Detention'
- Parents may be asked to take a student home immediately if there is a further breach
- Student put on report for one week (depending on progress, two weeks)
- Individual Improvement Behaviour Plan to be set up for the student by .....

STAGE 7

Student continues to be disruptive and is in breach of school rules- leading to further incidents sheets **Action:**

- Matter referred to Deputy-Principal / Principal
- Meeting with Parents / Guardians
- Suspension Ref: Policy on Suspension)
- Re-integration plan for student on his return
- Referral to Behaviour Support Classroom for support

If a student exhibits any of the following behaviours during class (or elsewhere) he is removed from class. The student starts on this stage 'Stage 7' (or he proceeds from any previous stage);*

(i) aggression, or threatening behaviour towards staff /student(s),
(ii) malicious damage to school property or to property of other people,
(iii) behaviour likely to endanger the safety of others,
(iv) substance abuse,
(v) leaving the school without permission,
(vi) interfering with the fire alarm.

**This stage also applies if such behaviour occurs outside class; including ion the school premises, on the school grounds, going to/from school, on school activities, etc.*

STAGE 8

Student continues to be disruptive and is in breach of school rules- leading to further incidents sheets

Action:

- Matter referred to Principal/Deputy-Principal
- Matter referred to the Board of Management
- Meeting with Parents/Guardians

- Suspension (Ref: Policy on Suspension)
- Re-integration plan for student
- Referral to Behaviour Support Classroom for support
- Matter referred to Supporting agencies, examples: NEPS / NEWB

STAGE 9

Student continues to be disruptive and is in breach of school rules- leading to further incidents sheets

Action:

- Matter referred to the Board of Management
- Parents are invited to a meeting with the Board of Management
- Suspension (Ref: Policy on Suspension)
- Re-integration plan for student

STAGE 10

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).

Appendix 1 Class Tutor

- Class tutors will meet with their assigned class on a weekly basis
- Journals will be monitored weekly to ensure parent/ guardian signature
- Concern will be passed on to Year Head if five or more negative comments are recorded weekly in the journal and will be dealt with according to Stage 4
- Negative comments in journal may be 'redeemed' via positive comments
- Tutor time may also be used for Year Group assemblies with Year Head, relaying information, reinforcing expected behaviour, motivation, encouraging team spirit, reward systems for students encouraging positive behaviour, life and study skills (tutor class activities/programme, etc)

Appendix 2 Care Team

Care Team may implement an intervention plan for the student involving home-school liaison, career guidance support, behavioural support, resource teaching or referral to outside agencies

Appendix 3

Students with Special needs separate Policy

Appendix 4

Mobile phone Policy
2 day confiscation

Appendix 5

School Journal

Appendix 6

Suspension Policy

Appendix 7

Expulsion Policy

Mercy College

Incident Sheet

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Class: _____

Nature of complaint:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Intervention to date:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Response from Student:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Teacher's Signature:_____