

Dominican College Sion Hill



Code of Behaviour

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Section 1 – Introduction

This code was drawn up in the context of Sion Hill being a community in the Dominican tradition where each person is valued and where all students are encouraged to develop their personalities and talents.

The code, which is based on the principles of respect, equality, co-operation and natural justice, has regard to the rights and responsibilities of management, teachers, pupils and parents. The overall aim of the code is to maintain desirable standards of behaviour and to foster understanding and co-operation between teachers, pupils and parents.

The code provides a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour. It ensures that every effort is made to accommodate the individuality of each pupil and acknowledges the right of each pupil to education in a disruption-free environment.

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the code is administered in a manner which is consistent and fair for all pupils.

Parents are expected to encourage their children to abide by the code and to actively support the teaching staff in the application of the code

Section 2 – School Rules

1. Respectful behaviour towards people and property is expected at all times.

Students are required to show courtesy, respect, consideration and good manners to all.

Students must keep their environment clean and tidy at all times.

2. Bullying is strictly forbidden. The deliberate causing of distress, whether mental or physical, is never acceptable (see appendix 1)

3. In order to facilitate learning students must:

Attend all their classes;

Arrive punctually;

Sign in if late;

Provide a note (in diary) from parent of guardian if absent from school

Provide a note (in diary) from parent of guardian if leaving before the end of the school day

Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability;

Have the necessary books and equipment;

Have their journals with them at all times.

4. All absences must be acknowledged in the school journal by parent or guardian.

Students leaving early must obtain permission from the deputy principal or the principal and must sign out.

Students must stay within the school grounds as defined by the authorities.

5. Full uniform is obligatory.

A high standard of dress and appearance is expected.

Jewellery should be simple and in keeping with uniform - maximum of two rings, one pair of discreet earrings and one small chain. No facial jewellery is allowed

Only natural hair colouring and make-up are permitted

6. All mobile phones must be powered off and placed in lockers during the entire school day (i.e. from 08.45 – 15.00/15.40)

The penalty for being found in possession of mobile phone on school campus during the school day is confiscation and 2 hours of detention.

Non-camera phones will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Any student found in possession of a camera phone on the school campus at **any time** will have the phone confiscated and will receive two hours detention. A parent or guardian must collect the phone. A repeat offence may warrant further sanctions up to and including suspension.

7. Use of personal media players is only permitted during break and lunch-time.

8. Students must abide by all Health and Safety regulations.

9. Smoking is not allowed on school property or while wearing school uniform.

10. Any involvement with alcohol or illegal substances is forbidden

11. In the interests of hygiene, chewing gum is not permitted.

12. The use of vending machines is only allowed during break and lunch- time.

In all cases the school authorities are the ultimate arbiters.

Section 3 – Sanctions

The range of sanctions that will be used are listed below. In each case the sanction applied should be proportional to the offence committed.

Verbal Warning

Mark in student diary

Detention

Reports to parents

Referral to Year Head

Referral to Principal

Internal suspension

External suspension

Referral to board of management

Expulsion

Appendix 1: Bullying A Guide for Parents

What is the aim of the school in relation to bullying?

The aim of the school is to create a positive environment where students are free from fear, oppression and intimidation and to create a "telling" school where pupils feel free to report incidents of bullying.

What is bullying?

Bullying is **repeated** aggression, - verbal, psychological or physical - conducted by an individual or group against others.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour would normally not constitute bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.

Typical types of bullying that may be encountered at school include:

Name Calling (Slagging):

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s), which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as bullying. This should not be confused with the good natured banter which often goes on as part of the normal social interchange between people. When slagging extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at the one individual about appearance, race, skin colour, religious denomination, clothing, personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family then it should be considered to be bullying

Isolation:

A student may be deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. It may be accompanied by spreading rumours, writing insulting remarks about the victim on blackboards or in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

Damage to Property:

Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Intimidation:

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it is based on the use of very aggressive body language. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called "look" - a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Abusive Telephone Calls & Text Messages

Anonymous telephone may be made by the bullies, or in some cases, by third parties at the request of the bullies.

Extortion:

Demands for money may be made. Victims' lunches or lunch money may be taken. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes this tactic may be used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim.

Physical Aggression:

This behaviour is more common among boys than girls. It includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.

Who gets bullied?

Any child may be bullied.

Effects of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them,

their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. It is therefore, important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

What should parents watch out for?

A child who is being bullied will often not want to come to school and may often claim to have headaches or other symptoms to avoid attending school. Other warning signs include damaged property, lost property, isolation from friends,

What should parents do if they suspect that their daughter is being bullied?

It is recognised internationally that most cases of bullying go unreported. The most important step in dealing with bullying is telling someone about it. If your daughter tells you that she is being bullied, she has overcome the single biggest obstacle to dealing with the situation. It may happen that in telling you, your daughter will put pressure on you not to tell the school what is happening. This should be resisted by you as the school cannot deal with the situation if it is unaware of what is happening

Parents should contact the school if they have any suspicions that their daughter is a victim of bullying. Contact can be made with the class tutor, the year head, the principal, the deputy principal or any other teacher that the child feels comfortable with.

What will the school do if bullying is reported?

The school will handle all reports of bullying in a sensitive manner and while endeavour to protect the identity of whoever makes the report. All reports of bullying will be investigated by talking to the victims and the alleged bullies or, if appropriate, the whole class group. In most cases parents of all concerned will also be spoken to. The aim of these interviews is to get a clear picture of what is happening and to make those who are doing the bullying aware of the consequences of their actions.

The aim of the school will be to end the bullying behaviour rather than to simply punish the bullies. Where appropriate, sanctions will be applied and/or referrals will be made to counselling or psychological service

Preventative Measures

The school will

- Endeavour to provide a safe environment for students
- Organise Bullying Awareness events
- Try to create an atmosphere where students are comfortable about reporting bullying
- Encourage those not directly involved to report bullying
- Make all students, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff aware of this policy
- Evaluate this policy regularly

Each class will develop and display a Class Charter on bullying and from these the school will develop a School Charter

Appendix 2

Smoking, Alcohol and Illegal Substances

The school is concerned that both parents and students be fully aware of the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs. Through the normal curriculum and through other school events, the school will provide information on the dangers of Smoking, Alcohol and Illegal Substances to students, parents and staff.

Smoking

The use of tobacco products by any student in the school buildings, or in the school grounds or in the immediate environs of the school is strictly prohibited. Students are not permitted to smoke coming to school or on their way home.

An initial breach of this rule will lead to sanctions being applied. Subsequent breaches represent an escalation of the problem and the Year Head and the Principal will meet to discuss appropriate measures.

Senior students may be allowed to smoke while abroad on school trips if the school has written permission from their parents for this.

Alcohol

The use, possession, sale or distribution of alcohol in school and at all school based and school related activities is prohibited. Any student found in possession of alcohol will be suspended pending investigation.

Illegal Substances

The use, possession supply or organisation of the supply of illegal substances by students on school grounds and at all school based and school related activities is prohibited. The school reserves the right

to suspend immediately any student found to be in breach of this policy and to continue such suspension until such time as a board of management meeting can be convened

to expel any student found to be in breach of this policy

to request that students suspected of involvement in the use of illegal substances present for medical examination in consultation with the parents concerned.

to require a student who has breached this policy to enrol in a counselling programme as determined by the school in consultation with her parents

to impose sanctions which may include expulsion on any student who refuses to accede to the school's reasonable request for medical examination

Appendix 3 – Guidelines for Parents

If possible, dental and medical appointments should be made outside school hours.

Articles of clothing and personal possessions are to be clearly marked with the owner's name. It is inadvisable for students to bring items of value to school. The School management accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to a student's property.

If a student is unable to attend school the parent should always write a note to this effect in her diary. Even if the parent phones the school s/he should also write a note in the diary.

It is important to inform the Principal of any circumstances, medical, educational, family or otherwise, which may have a bearing on your daughter's happiness, behaviour and/or performance in school.

Parents should check the Student Diary regularly and sign it (in both places) each week

If you wish your daughter to leave school within the school day she must have your permission in writing beforehand - Use the Student Diary

If a student becomes ill during the school day and needs to go home, the school will contact you. ***We will not send any student home without first contacting her home.***

The school must have up-to-date contact telephone numbers. If these have changed since you filled out your application form please let us have the new information immediately.

Please notify the school immediately of any change in address.

Meetings with the Principal, the Tutor or class teachers can be arranged by appointment. Formal Parent/Teacher meetings for each year group are held each year. This and other important dates will be listed in the Student Diary.

The school has the services of a Guidance Counsellor

Appendix 4 – Procedures

Catagories of misbehaviour—Suggestions for discussion

Minor Lateness/Uniform/Homework/Giddiness/Chatting

Moderate Serious non-attendance /Mitching /Once-off Bullying/Smoking /Defiance

Major Physical abuse /Stealing of large monies /Substance abuse /Bullying

The support of staff, students and parents is critical in implementing an agreed code of discipline in a fair and effective manner.

Minor misdemeanors should be dealt with by the class teacher on a one to one basis

Repeated instances of minor misbehaviour or a single instance of more serious misbehaviour should be reported to the class tutor

Appropriate sanctions should be applied by the class tutor

A written record of all such instances should be maintained by the tutor. This record should indicate the warning and/or advice given to the pupil and the consequences of its repetition

Pupils should be informed when incidents of misbehaviour are being recorded

Up to date records should be given to the Year Head by the Tutor at the end of each month

A more serious breach of discipline should be brought to the immediate attention of the Year Head by either the class teacher directly or via the Tutor

A complaint form should be used for continuous minor misdemeanours and for major misdemeanours such as disruption, defiance, preventing teacher from teaching etc. This should be given to the year head

Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children and their co-operation in addressing the problem requested by the Year Head

A written record of all serious misbehaviour , the steps taken in dealing with it e.g. meeting with the parents, should be kept by the Year Head and a copy given to the Principal

If a teacher experiences extreme misbehaviour in class, he or she, should send a student (not the one who is misbehaving) for the Principal or Deputy Principal who will then remove the misbehaving student from the class.

Where the misbehaviour is of a very serious nature e.g. physical assault, substance abuse or any matters affecting Health and Safety, the Year Head shall bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Principal/Deputy Principal

Where suspension of a pupil is contemplated, the parents should be invited to the school to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal and/or the Year Head /Class teacher

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Board of Management as expulsion will be considered

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Management Authority shall empower the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents

Pupils who are removed from class should not be left in an unsupervised situation

A “Sin Bin “ supervised area should be designated for the immediate ‘Treatment ‘ of unacceptable class behaviour

Management and staff should recognise that a school has an obligation to all its pupils, whether they be difficult or amenable, to promote their educational welfare as far as it possibly can, and to take account of the effects that home environment can have on the performance and behaviour of pupils.