Mount Temple Comprehensive School

All Different, All Equal

Code of Behaviour

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1. Ethos and Core Values

All Different, All Equal

We promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment where everyone is valued and supported to achieve their best.
Our ethos emphasises positive relationships, responsibility and fairness, guiding how we learn, interact and resolve difficulties.

We are committed to:

- **Respect and Kindness** – treating others with empathy, courtesy and understanding.
- **Integrity and Responsibility** – being honest, dependable and accountable for our actions.
- **Inclusion and Equality** – valuing difference and promoting equal opportunities for all.
- **Learning and Growth** – encouraging curiosity, creativity and persistence.
- **Restorative Practice** – focusing on understanding, repair and positive change.

These values shape daily life in Mount Temple. They are how we support one another, approach challenges, and contribute to a positive learning community. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and may reflect a student's level of regulation, stress or emotional need. The school promotes equality of access and participation for all, in accordance with the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018. Discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind is not tolerated.

2. Introduction and Legislative Framework

This Code of Behaviour sets out how we promote positive behaviour and respond to challenges in a fair and consistent way.
 It has been developed in line with **Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000** and the **NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008)**.

It also takes account of key national legislation and frameworks, including:

- **Education Act (1998)**
- **Education (Welfare) Act (2000)**
- **Children First Act (2015)** and **Child Protection Procedures (2023)**
- **Equal Status Acts (2000–2018)**
- **Bí Cineálta: National Anti-Bullying Framework (2024)**
- **Wellbeing Framework for Schools (2023)**

This Code works in partnership with other school policies such as:

- **Substance Use Policy**
- **Mobile Phone Policy**
- **ICT Acceptable Use Policy**
- **Dress Code**
- **Dignity at Work Policy**
- **AEN Policy**
- **Trips Policy**

Definitions

For clarity, "parent" includes legal guardians and "student" refers to all learners enrolled in the school.

3. Scope and Applicability

This Code of Behaviour applies to all students when they are:

- **In school** - during the school day and at all times on school grounds.
- **In situations outside school** where behaviour has a clear and direct impact on the wellbeing of others, the orderly running of the school, or the school's reputation
- **Taking part in school activities or trips** - including sports events, outings, and extracurricular activities.

Consultation and Development

This Code of Behaviour was developed through consultation with students, parents/guardians, staff and the Board of Management, reflecting the shared values and responsibilities of the school community.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

Our Code of Behaviour is built on mutual respect between students, staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.
Everyone has rights, and with those rights come responsibilities.

Students

- **Right:** To learn in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.
- **Responsibility:** To treat others respectfully and engage in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment.

Staff

- **Right:** To work in a safe and supportive environment.
- **Responsibility**: To model respectful behaviour and apply this Code fairly.

Parents/Guardians

- **Right:** To be informed about matters affecting their child.
- **Responsibility:** To support this Code and communicate respectfully with the school.

Board of Management

- **Right:** To expect that the Code is implemented.
- **Responsibility:** To ensure that the Code is lawful, equitable and reviewed periodically.

5. Promoting Positive Behaviour

We encourage positive behaviour by focusing on prevention, support and restoration.
Our aim is to create an inclusive, caring school climate where good choices are recognised and supported. We strive to promote predictable routines, clear structures and supportive environments for all students that reduce stress and help them regulate and engage positively in learning, while recognising that some students may require higher levels of support.

We promote positive behaviour through:

- building an inclusive and respectful atmosphere in every classroom and activity
- recognising and celebrating kindness, effort and achievement
- encouraging student leadership, mentoring and peer support
- using restorative conversations to repair relationships and build understanding
- maintaining clear routines and high expectations for learning and conduct
- working in partnership with parents and guardians to support each student's progress
- Promoting involvement in Extra-Curricular Activities.
- Recognising achievements, building self esteem and promoting positive connection.

Students contribute to the development of school life through leadership roles, peer mentoring and participation in student voice initiatives that promote respect and inclusion.
Promoting positive behaviour is central to student wellbeing and supports the development of confidence, relationships and belonging.

6. Standards of Behaviour

Students are expected to uphold the following standards at all times:

Respect for Others

- Show courtesy, kindness and empathy to all members of the school community.
- Support a positive and inclusive environment, free from bullying, harassment or intimidation, **in line with the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy.**
- Treat staff and classmates with respect in words, actions and tone.
- Contribute to a school atmosphere where everyone feels safe, valued and included.

Respect for Learning

- Attend classes on time and be ready to learn.
- Bring the required materials for teaching and learning.
- Engage positively and avoid behaviour that distracts, disrupts or interferes with the learning or teaching of others.
- Follow teacher instructions and contribute constructively to class activities.

Respect for Property and the Environment

- **Care for school property**, your own belongings, and the belongings of others.
- Where damage occurs, **restitution** and a **restorative response** will apply.

Health and Safety

- **Follow staff directions** to ensure a safe environment.
- **Substance use** (including vaping, smoking, nicotine products and other prohibited substances) are prohibited and managed under the **Substance Use Policy.**
- Avoid any **unsafe or reckless behaviour**.

Digital Conduct

- Use technology responsibly in line with the **ICT Acceptable Use Policy** and **Mobile Phone Policy**.
- Do not engage in **cyberbullying, harassment, or harmful sharing** of content.

Dress and Presentation

- Follow the school's **Dress Code** and present appropriately for school activities.

7. Responding to Behaviour (Graduated and Restorative)

The school uses a graduated approach to responding to behaviour. Progression through stages may occur at any point, depending on the seriousness, frequency or impact of the behaviour. Not every response listed below will be appropriate or necessary in every situation.

Responses are proportionate and consider context, age, individual needs, and the rights of others to learn and feel safe. Staff will use their professional judgement to determine the most appropriate response in each case. The school recognises that some behaviours arise from dysregulation, anxiety or overload rather than intentional defiance. Where possible, staff aim to support students to re-establish calm before moving to more formal stages of response

Stage 1 (Classroom)

Teacher-led responses may include:

- a prompt or reminder
- redirection or seating change
- an opportunity to reflect or repair
- a brief restorative conversation
- recording the concern where appropriate

Immediate intervention may be required where behaviour is serious.

Stage 2 (Pastoral)

Pastoral responses may include:

- parent/guardian contact
- a reflection form
- a pastoral meeting
- a daily/target report
- a restorative conversation with the tutor or Year Head

Stage 3 (Senior Leadership)

Senior Leadership responses may include:

- a formal parent/guardian meeting
- a restorative conference
- a behaviour support plan
- a short suspension (1–3 days) where warranted

Stage 4 (Board of Management)

Board responses may include:

- extended suspension
- expulsion, following statutory procedures
- notification to Tusla where required

Additional restorative or practical consequences such as detention, community tasks or temporary withdrawal from activities may be used where appropriate and proportionate.

8. Fair Process and Investigation

- Concerns about behaviour are considered in a manner that is fair, timely and proportionate. Students are given an opportunity to share their perspective, and relevant information may be gathered as needed.
- Where appropriate, parents/guardians are informed and invited to support early resolution. Staff may speak with witnesses, review contextual information, and consider age, needs and any relevant additional educational needs (AEN).
- Immediate action may be required where behaviour poses a risk to safety or significantly disrupts the learning of others.
- Interventions focus on repairing harm, restoring relationships and supporting improved behaviour.
- Where a sanction is being considered, the student and parents/guardians are given an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made, except in emergency situations.
- Records of serious matters are kept in line with school procedures and data protection requirements.
- The school acts in accordance with the principles of natural justice and fair procedures.

9. Suspension and Expulsion Procedure

Grounds for Suspension:

Suspension may be considered for serious or persistent breaches of the Code of Behaviour, including (but not limited to):

- behaviour that seriously disrupts the learning of others or the teaching of staff
- threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour
- bullying, harassment or intimidation
- Possession or use of prohibited substances (including vaping, smoking, nicotine products and other prohibited substances such as THC products)
- wilful damage to property
- persistent defiance of reasonable instruction
- behaviour that endangers the safety, health or welfare of others

Suspension

A suspension may be authorised by the Principal (or a delegated Deputy Principal). Before a suspension is finalised, the student and parents/guardians are given an opportunity to respond, except in cases of immediate risk.

In cases of immediate suspension, parents/guardians are contacted as soon as possible by phone and receive written confirmation outlining:

- the reasons for suspension,
- the duration, and
- arrangements for re-entry to school.

Immediate suspension may be necessary where there is a serious risk to safety, including incidents involving weapons or prohibited substances such as THC products.

Suspensions of more than three school days require the approval of the Board of Management, except in exceptional circumstances where the Board has delegated authority to the Principal to impose a suspension of up to five days. Suspensions of more than five school days are considered extended suspensions and require the approval of the Board of Management.

Context and Supports:

Where a student's behaviour may be influenced by personal, social, medical or additional educational needs, the school may review existing supports and, where appropriate, consult with relevant staff (e.g. Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Department) to consider reasonable adjustments or alternative interventions. This does not preclude the use of suspension where warranted and fair.

Cumulative Suspension Review

Repeated suspensions will prompt a review of supports and interventions. Where appropriate, an individual behaviour improvement plan may be developed to support positive change

Expulsion

Expulsion is considered only for grave or persistent breaches of this Code of Behaviour and only after all appropriate supports and interventions have been considered. It is reserved for situations where the safety, wellbeing or rights of others are at significant risk, or where serious breaches have persisted despite sustained intervention.

The school will ensure full and fair procedures before any proposal to expel is made, including:
• A full investigation of the incident
• Written notification to parents/guardians of the concerns and that expulsion is being considered
• An opportunity for the student and parents/guardians to respond
• Consideration of supports and previous interventions
• Referral of the matter to the Board of Management for decision
• Suspension pending the Board meeting, where necessary to protect safety

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school will notify Tusla in writing at least 20 school days before an expulsion is intended to take effect. The Board of Management is the decision-making authority in all cases of proposed expulsion. A formal external appeal to the Department of Education (Section 29) is available to parents/guardians, or to students aged 18 years or over.

Weapons

The school distinguishes between possession of a weapon, threatening with a weapon and using a weapon. Possession will be assessed in context, including intent, cooperation and level of risk. Threatening with or using a weapon constitutes a serious risk to safety and may warrant immediate referral to the Board of Management for consideration of expulsion.

Prohibited Substances

The school distinguishes between possession or use of prohibited substances and supplying or attempting to supply such substances. Possession or use will be assessed in context and managed in line with this Code and the Substance Use Policy. Supplying or attempting to supply prohibited substances, including THC products such as vapes or edibles, is considered a serious risk to health and safety and may warrant immediate referral to the Board for consideration of expulsion.

Behaviours that may warrant referral to the Board of Management for consideration of expulsion include, but are not limited to:

• Use of or threatening with a weapon
• Supplying or attempting to supply prohibited substances, including THC products
• Possession of a weapon or prohibited substance, assessed in context
• Serious physical assault
• Serious threats to the safety or wellbeing of others
• Deliberate and significant damage to property
• Repeated or serious behaviour that poses a substantial risk to the school community
• Serious or persistent breaches of this Code despite sustained interventions

The Board of Management will consider all relevant factors before making a decision, including the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the age and circumstances of the student, the supports provided to date and the impact of the behaviour on the safety and learning of others.

10. Reintegration and Restorative Meetings

- A reintegration meeting usually takes place before a student returns to class, ideally on the morning of re-entry.
- The purpose is to agree expectations, outline any supports, and plan for a positive return.
- The focus is on learning from the incident, repairing relationships, and restoring full participation in school life.

11. Behaviour Recording and Monitoring

Behaviour concerns, supports and positive contributions may be recorded in the school's behaviour system in line with school procedures. Records are reviewed by Year Heads, Head of Pastoral Care, Student Support Team (SST) and the Senior Leadership Team to identify patterns, ensure consistency and provide appropriate supports.

Behaviour-related information is stored securely and managed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy. Records are factual, proportionate and retained only for as long as necessary and in line with the Data Protection Policy.

12. Support for Students

The school provides a range of supports to help students develop positive behaviour and wellbeing. Support for students includes helping them understand and manage their regulation needs, and using co-regulation strategies to support calmness, safety and readiness to learn.
These may include:

- guidance and pastoral support
- individual behaviour or support plans
- AEN accommodations
- mentoring and restorative meetings
- access to NEPS or other external services

Students with additional educational needs are generally supported in line with the Mount Temple AEN Policy (2023/24). The AEN Department works collaboratively with staff and parents to provide appropriate supports as needed. Behavioural responses are reasonable and proportionate to each student's age, needs and circumstances.

13. Partnership with Parents and Guardians

The school values open and respectful communication with parents and guardians. Parents are encouraged to take part in restorative processes where appropriate. Feedback is provided through meetings and progress reviews to maintain a shared approach to supporting students.

14. Roles in Behaviour Management

The following roles outline how different members of the school community contribute to the consistent implementation of this Code of Behaviour. Responsibilities are shared, proportionate and guided by the principles of fairness, restoration and student wellbeing. Each role supports a safe, inclusive learning environment where positive behaviour can thrive.

Governance (Board of Management)

- Ratifies and reviews the Code of Behaviour.
- Ensures the Code complies with legislation and fair procedures.
- Approves suspensions of more than three school days (except where delegated authority exists).
- Considers and decides on proposed expulsions in accordance with statutory procedures.
- Receives summary reports on suspensions to support oversight of this Code.

Leadership (Senior Leadership Team (SLT) - Principal and Deputy Principals)

- Lead the implementation of this Code across the school.
- Coordinate behaviour practice and student care.
- Promote consistency in how the Code is applied.
- Manage suspensions and recommend expulsion where appropriate.
- Communicate with parents/guardians on serious behaviour matters.
- Report to the Board of Management and Tusla where required.

Pastoral Support (Year Heads, Tutors and Head of Pastoral Care & Wellbeing, Student Support Team)

- Monitor student progress, engagement and wellbeing.
- Liaise with parents/guardians, teachers and Leadership.
- Lead restorative approaches within their year groups.
- Coordinate supports and interventions where required.

Classroom Practice (Teaching Staff and SNAs)

- Promote positive behaviour, inclusion and engagement in the classroom.
- Apply restorative approaches where appropriate.
- Record relevant behaviour concerns in line with school procedures.
- Contribute to a supportive and safe learning environment.

Student Commitment

- Uphold this Code of Behaviour.
- Follow staff direction.
- Contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment.

Parent/Guardian Partnership

- Support their child's learning, behaviour and wellbeing.
- Engage respectfully with the school through appropriate channels.
- Attend meetings where required as part of behaviour-support processes.

15. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- The **Board of Management** reviews the Code of Behaviour **regularly, or when appropriate to do so**, to ensure it remains current, fair and effective.
- Consultation with **staff, students and parents** forms part of each review process.
- Reviews consider **trends in behaviour**, **restorative outcomes** and **wellbeing indicators**.
- Any updates are **approved by the Board** and **published on the school website**.

16. Implementation and Communication

The Code of Behaviour is communicated to students, parents and staff at the start of each school year and during induction. Staff receive guidance on restorative and behaviour practices as part of ongoing professional development.

Signed: _(signature)_ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _(signature)_ (Principal)

Date of Ratification: December 10th, 2025

Date of Next Review: December 2026