



Rosemont School-Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Dated: June 2017

Next review: 2019

Commitment

Rosemont School strives for excellence by creating an environment which fosters the development of each student in all aspects of the human person – spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social. Students are encouraged to set personal goals, take ownership of their learning and to initiate positive change. A sense of values and a commitment to the service of others together with a deep understanding of the Catholic faith is central to the mission of Rosemont.

Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy on suspension and expulsion has been drawn up in conjunction with Rosemont's mission statement and code of behaviour, in order to support the teaching and learning in Rosemont School. It has been developed in consultation and collaboration with students, staff and parents in Rosemont School in line with the guidelines issued by the NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board).

As a school with a Catholic ethos, Rosemont aims to provide an atmosphere in which personal growth (intellectual, spiritual, emotional, cultural and social) is fashioned and quality relationships with others are nurtured in accordance with Christian virtues. Positive behaviour supports the wellbeing of the individual student as well as the wellbeing of the whole school community, protecting the rights and dignity of all students and adults in our school. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying policy.

Our goal in Rosemont is to educate girls with individuality and character, who think for themselves; who are hopeful and resilient, enjoy learning and life; understand the Catholic faith; are good humoured, courageous, courteous and articulate; leaders, able to connect with people from all walks of life and committed to the common good.

We want our students to be active, positive participants in the learning process. The code of behaviour is necessary for students, parents and staff in assisting the development of the students. This code will allow the school function in an orderly and harmonious way, creating an atmosphere of respect amongst students and teachers with the backup of parents, thus affording maximum potential for effective teaching and learning.

Coaching

At Rosemont there is an emphasis on the individual. Each student is assigned a personal coach who is a member of staff. The student can meet with her coach every three weeks. Coaches encourage students to set targets and goals for themselves. Our coaching system is especially effective because it focuses on the needs of each individual.

Coaches promote learning at every level of the person; academic, spiritual, human, social, personal, interpersonal. Any problems encountered with particular subjects can be discussed with the coach who can then liaise directly with the subject teacher. Rosemont's unique coaching programme is an excellent way to support students in all areas of school life including high standards of behaviour.

Positive Behaviour Management

In Rosemont, opportunities are taken to affirm students who show good behaviour, progress or effort in a number of ways. Achievements, both school and personal, academic and non-academic are acknowledged. Details of how these are acknowledged are laid out in Rosemont's code of behaviour.

Suspension and Expulsion In the case of unacceptable behaviour where the code of behaviour is not being adhered to and it is deemed to be in the best interests of the school community and /or the student involved, suspension and/ or expulsion are options available to the Principal and/ or the Board of Management.

The Board of Management and the Principal are guided in these instances by their responsibilities to the whole school community and the principles of natural justice.

In the case of suspension the decision may be taken by the day to day management team of the school, i.e. the Principal or in the Principal's absence the Deputy Principal. If, in the judgement of the Principal a student should be expelled, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management for decision.

Suspension

The Board of Management empowers the Principal or in the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal to suspend any student who is in serious breach of the school's code of behaviour or for any behaviour deemed by the school management as serious misconduct e.g. smoking on school premises, repeated bullying, incidents of cyber bullying (using email, websites, social media, mobile phones, and apps) insolence to school staff etc (these are some examples- this list is not exhaustive).

Grounds for suspension

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the teaching and learning in the school and on the education of other students
- the student's behaviour has had or may have a detrimental effect on the mental health of other members of the school community
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property. A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

Suspension should be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension should:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour
- Take into account the need to protect the well-being of other students who may have been affected

The following are factors which may be examined before suspension:

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has there been any escalation of the problem?
- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, on the grounds, in a group, on-line, via social media, or other forms of communication such as on mobile devices, etc.)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)
- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the behaviour have an impact on the mental health of some students?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?
- Does the student understand and accept the gravity of the situation/their behaviour?
- Does the student show remorse for their behaviour?
- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Do the parents understand and accept the impact of the problem behaviour on the teaching and learning in the school?
- Do the parents understand and accept the impact of the problem behaviour on the health and safety of students in the school?

- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS))?
- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?
- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

In principle where the misconduct of a pupil warrants it she may be suspended for a limited number of days. However, usually before any suspension occurs the parents/guardians will be called in, the nature of the misbehaviour will be explained to them, and a formal warning that the pupil is in line for suspension will be given to both parents and pupil.

Procedures in respect of suspension

The Principal will keep a record of the circumstances and evidence relating to disciplinary cases. The record indicates what actions were taken before suspension was considered. The following courses of action may be considered as a means of resolving behavioural problems that might lead to suspension.

- a. The details of the alleged incident should be investigated, usually by the Deputy Principal, and recorded.
- b. The pupil(s) involved should be given an opportunity to respond. The student's responses should be recorded.
- c. Parents/Guardians usually will be requested to attend a meeting with the management team of the school and/or the student(s), where the nature of the misbehaviour will be explained to them, and a formal warning that the pupil is in line for suspension will be given to both parents and pupil
- d. An undertaking of good behaviour may be requested in writing.
- e. Agreed conditions may be requested, set down in writing and signed by the student and parent/guardian.

In the cases of serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour, after a certain length of time, if there is no improvement, then the Principal may decide that the student ought to be suspended.

Suspension may be imposed by the Principal or the Board of Management. Expulsion may be imposed by the Board of Management only. Such sanctions shall only be imposed following due process and adherence to the principles of natural justice.

The Principal may suspend any pupil for a period of up to three days and shall report any such suspension to the Board of Management at its next meeting. The Board of Management may decide to suspend a student for longer than three days.

Informing parents of a decision to suspend

The parents will be informed in writing

1. of the reason for the suspension
2. of the period of the suspension
3. that the student will be regarded as being in the care of the parents from the end of the school day on which she was suspended.
4. that the parents may appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Management

Other Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person, or cause them serious distress or anxiety.

Suspension during a State examination

This sanction should normally be approved by the Board of Management and should only be used where there is:

- a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- a threat to the safety of other students and personnel
- a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

The sanction should be a proportionate response to the behaviour.

For example, it would rarely be appropriate for a first offence, unless there is a threat to the good order of the conduct of the examination.

This sanction should be treated like any other suspension, and the principles and fair procedures governing suspensions are applied.

Automatic suspension The Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction.

Appeals

In the case of suspension an appeal may be made to the Board of Management in writing. A suspension may already have been served before the appeal is actually heard. If the appeal is successful, the suspension will then be removed from the student's record.

Procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student to the school

1. Parents/ Guardians may be requested to attend a meeting with the student and the management team of the school.
2. An undertaking of good behaviour may be requested in writing.
3. Agreed conditions may be requested, set down in writing and signed by the student and parent/guardian.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and is only employed in extreme cases of indiscipline, gross misconduct or repeated breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

A decision by the Principal to recommend to the Board of Management the expulsion of a student will occur only when such is the serious nature of an incident or incidents, or occasion(s) of misconduct that the Principal deems that the only course available to them is a recommendation to the Board of Management for the expulsion of the student.

A decision by the Principal to recommend to the Board of Management the expulsion of a student will only occur when the following procedures have been carried out:

1. The school management are satisfied that all other sanctions have been exhausted, *and/ or* all other solutions deemed reasonable by the Principal have been explored and found unsatisfactory.
2. When the parents/guardians have been informed of the Principal's intention to recommend expulsion.
3. When the parents/guardians are provided with a full written description of the allegation(s) against the student and the case being made to the Board of Management.

A decision made by the Board of Management to expel a student may be appealed under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Appeals Procedure

Under Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998:

1. the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the Board of Management against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,
2. grievances of students, or their parent(s), relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a)) or Section 29, shall be heard,
3. appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there are three contingencies in which the student (over 18) or the parent may appeal to the Secretary General of the DES, as follows:

1. where the Board permanently excludes a student from the school,
2. where a student is suspended for a period of 20 days or more in one school year,
3. where the school refuses to enrol a student.

Such an appeal may only be made following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school in accordance with Section 28.

Next review: 2019

For further information:

Rosemont School Code of Behaviour

DES Best Practice Guidelines concerning Certificate Examinations

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Education Act 1998.

National Educational Welfare Board-Developing a Code of Behaviour-guidelines for Schools