

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Suspension

1. General

- 1.1 Suspension is a serious sanction and involves the removal of a student from the regular school timetable for a specified, limited period of school days as determined by this Policy or by the school authorities.
- 1.2 Suspension will only be imposed where other efforts to resolve a disciplinary situation have been exhausted or where the nature of an incident dictates that the student be removed from the school (or class) immediately.
- 1.3 Circumstances in which suspension may be considered include:
 - repeated incidents of indiscipline, in spite of warnings and interventions by staff
 - failure of the student to recognise legitimate authority
 - behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right of other students to learn
 - particularly serious incident(s) which endanger the safety and welfare of others
 - behaviour involving serious damage to property
 - where the discipline incident is so critical that suspension has to be immediate.
- 1.4 The Board of Management has sanctioned an immediate suspension for smoking on or near the school campus (two days for first offence and four days for any subsequent breach). In addition, the *Substance Use Policy* (see school website) outlines the recommended suspension associated with substance misuse.
- 1.5 Suspension is a statement by the school that the student's conduct has broken acceptable boundaries. It will be a matter of record and notified to the Board of Management. Notes of all incidents, meetings and interviews must be retained in case they are required to support a decision to suspend.

2. Suspension Procedure

- 2.1 The Principal/Deputy-Principal have the authority to suspend a student. In the event that the Principal and Deputy Principal are unavailable nominated substitutes will have the authority to suspend. This sanction should be imposed with reference to the Relationships and Behaviour Policy and to the specific incident.
- 2.2 Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:
 - inform the student about the complaint and give him/her an opportunity to respond
 - parents/guardians will be informed by phone and given an opportunity to respond
 - a meeting with parents and student may be arranged to explore the matter further
- 2.3 Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted a formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension parents/guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- 2.4 The National Education Welfare Board 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.

3. Period and Type of Suspension

- 3.1 In imposing a suspension and in deciding its duration, the following factors will be considered:
 - the seriousness of the breach/breaches of school regulations
 - the severity of the behaviour, the frequency of its occurrence and the likelihood of its recurring
 - the behaviour of the student up to the time of suspension

- previous interventions
 - the age, state of health and special needs of the student
 - the possible negative impact of the student's behaviour on other students in the school.
- 3.2 In certain circumstances and at the discretion of the school authorities an 'in-house suspension' may be imposed. Out of school suspensions and in-house suspensions are regarded with equal gravity.

4. Implementing the Suspension

- 4.1 The parents/guardians of a student being suspended will be informed by:
- telephone, where they can be contacted
 - a copy of the letter sent by post (registered if it is deemed necessary).
- 4.2 The letter will contain:
- the reason(s) for suspension
 - the length and dates of the suspension
 - the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- 4.3 The letter may also contain the following (depending on individual circumstances):
- a statement of the importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter including any commitments to be entered into by the student
 - arrangements for the return of the student to school.
- 4.4 During the period of suspension a student is not permitted to enter the school premises without prior permission nor is a student permitted to loiter in the vicinity of the school premises.
The suspension may be lifted temporarily to facilitate a student to participate in a State Examination.
- 4.5 The student upon his/her return to school may be required to report to the Deputy Principal and/or Year Leader before being permitted to go to class.

5. Appeal

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 If the parents/guardians are not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Management, they may appeal to the Department of Education and Science 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.

Exclusion

1. General

- 1.1 The Board of Management has the authority to exclude a student. A student is excluded when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.
- 1.2 Exclusion is the ultimate sanction available to the school and is exercised by the Board of Management only in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour such as:
- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
 - the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety to other users of the school campus
 - the student is responsible for serious damage or theft to property.
 - the student persistently fails to adhere to the Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

2. Exclusion Procedures

- 2.1 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 exclusion. Both parents/guardians and students will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour.
- 2.2 Where the Principal takes the view that exclusion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider exclusion. The Principal will:
 - inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider exclusion
 - ensure that parents/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider exclusion
 - provide the Board of Management with the same records as supplied to parents/guardians
 - notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
 - ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing
 - advise parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- 2.3 At the hearing of the case the Principal and the parents, or student aged eighteen or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party may question the evidence of the other party at the hearing. Principal and parents/guardians will not be present for Board deliberations.
- 2.4 If the Board, having considered all the facts, is of the opinion that the student should be excluded the Board will notify the National Educational Welfare Board under Section 24(1) of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*. The Board of Management will not effect the exclusion within 20 days of the Education Welfare Board being notified. Suspension will be applied for this period. The Board will communicate its decision in writing to the parents/guardians and outline the next phase of the process involving the Educational Welfare Officer.
- 2.5 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 student will be informed of the right to appeal under the *Education Act 1998* section 29 and supplied with the standard form.

This policy was reviewed in the 2017/2018 academic year. In the academic year 2022/2023, the Board of Management stipulated that all school policies will be subject to review as required going forward, in line with changing information, guidelines, legislation and/or feedback from school stakeholders.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 18th April 2018.