



---

# Balla Secondary School

## Code of Behaviour

Balla Secondary School exists to provide an effective education service to all its students.

**Scope of policy:** This policy applies to all of the students of Balla Secondary School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours.

### Rationale

1. To ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school
2. To maintain order in the school.
3. To clarify expectations of behaviour.
4. To outline rewards and sanctions.
5. To make parents and students aware of procedures for dealing with misbehaviour and infringement of school rules.
6. To make parents and students aware of procedures for suspensions and expulsions.

### Mission Statement

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states that:

- Balla Secondary School is a Catholic Co-Educational School.
- We aim to provide a Christian Education for all our students.
- We work with the community of students, teachers, parents, and management to create an atmosphere of equality and respect.
- We strive for excellence and we encourage each student to reach his/her potential in a caring, positive and happy environment.

### School Ethos

This policy reflects the ethos of our school which states that:

- Balla Secondary School is a Christian community where all members grow to value their own worth as persons, their links with their family and the interdependence of all people.
- We aim to be inclusive, to provide for the education of the whole person in the fullest sense, to be especially mindful of the disadvantaged and those with special needs.
- Members of our school community co-operate in an educational experience which promotes the formation of young people in a value-based, Christian education in the Catholic tradition. However, we welcome students from other religious traditions and we are aware of and sensitive to their needs.

### Objective

This Code of Behaviour strives to ensure that:

- Teaching and learning can take place without disruption. It is expected that all students will contribute to the school as a learning organisation by maintaining these standards of good behaviour.
- Parents and students are aware of the standards of behaviour to be observed by each student attending the school so as to maintain “an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the school”.
- The school endeavors to apply the principles of natural justice and have regard for any medical or other reason which may affect a student’s behaviour.
- All members of the school community were consulted in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on the Code of Behaviour in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.

### Role of Parents/Guardians

Supportive parents/guardians and a favourable home environment play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes



---

which produce good behaviour in school.  
In particular, parents should:

- (i) Co-operate with the school by encouraging their son or daughter to abide by the school rules.
- (ii) Actively support the school staff in the application of the Code of Behaviour.
- (iii) Keep themselves informed of their son's or daughter's behaviour, progress, attendance and punctuality by checking and signing their son's or daughter's school journal on a daily basis.
- (iv) Contact the school if they are concerned about any aspect of their son's or daughter's progress.

In the spirit of good communication the school will endeavour to keep parents/guardians informed of their son or daughter's progress and to alert them at an early stage if difficulties arise.

Parents/Guardians should note that they have the right to appeal any decision to the Principal or to the Board of Management as appropriate.

### **Role of staff members**

Staff recognises the importance of modelling the school's expected standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other.

Two interlinked approaches are used to facilitate the creation of an educational and caring environment in the school.

1. **Pastoral Care Structure**
2. **School Rules & Procedures**

### **Pastoral Care Structure**

Pastoral Care is holistic. It recognises and respects the young person who is on the road to becoming an adult. It is an integral part of life within the school.

*A caring which may happen is not as valuable as a caring which must happen because a structure and a programme exists in the school.*

All class teachers and staff members have a central role to play in this.

We have a **Class Tutor** and a **Year Head** system in place. Class Tutors and Year Heads monitor the progress of students and any problems being experienced by them.

Our **Mentoring System** in which Fifth Year students link up with First Year help provide additional support for students as they make the transition to post-primary education.

Junior Cycle classes have a timetabled class each week to help them in their Social, Personal and Health development.

Our Pastoral Care team is available to meet with students and to help them with their difficulties.

### **School Rules & Procedures**

#### **1. Atmosphere of Learning:**

The School aims to promote and develop a positive educational community. It encourages self discipline and co-operation in learning so that a positive school atmosphere prevails. All members of the School Community are requested to move quietly around the school in an orderly manner, walking and not running on corridors and stairs.

#### **2. Rewards**

Balla Secondary School endeavours to promote co-operation amongst students and teachers; and acknowledges responsible behaviour by students in the following ways:



- Student Achievement Awards awarded annually
- Commendation Sheets given to students who merit special recognition
- Notice Board and Trophy Cabinet noting special achievements
- Outings for class/year groups
- School Year Book

### **3. Mobile Phones and other Personal Electronic Equipment.**

- Mobile phones and other electronic equipment e.g. i-pods should be switched off during the school day other than at the 11 o'clock break and at lunch break.
- Taking/disseminating of photographic/video/audio recordings is strictly prohibited.

**Failure to comply with this will result in confiscation of the device which is at the discretion of the school authorities. Penalty points may also be given for mobile phone breaches.**

### **4. Internet Policy**

Students are expected to use computers and computer networks solely for the purpose of education and academic research. Students must not tamper with or reconfigure any computer software without permission of a teacher.

Students may not misuse electronic mail or have access to internet sites that violate any aspect of this code of behaviour.

Any student using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the purpose of bullying a fellow student, insulting or defaming a teacher or any other member of staff associated with the school and / or bringing the school into disrepute in any fashion will be immediately suspended, pending a full meeting of the Board of Management.

### **5. Homework**

- a) Homework and revision are essential components of schoolwork.
- b) Homework assignments must be recorded by students in the official School Journal.
- c) Assigned homework, whether oral or written, must be completed to a satisfactory standard. Failure to complete assigned homework is a breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- d) Parents/Guardians may be requested by a teacher to sign homework or the student's School Journal where a student has not completed same to a satisfactory level. The school reserves the right not to permit the student concerned to attend a specific class or classes in general until this has been done, where requested. This is in addition to other sanctions which may be imposed in accordance with this Code of Behaviour.

### **6. School Journal**

- a) The School Journal is used as a means of communication between the School and parent/guardian and also as a means whereby students record the homework which they have been assigned.
- b) Parents/guardians are requested to check and sign the School Journal daily and ensure that assigned homework has been completed and should observe any communication to parents/guardians from the school requiring their attention.
- c) The loss of a School Journal or defacing or removing of pages from same is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour. Where this arises students must present a written explanation for same signed by parents/guardians and may be required to purchase a replacement School Journal. Failure to comply with the rules relating to the School Journal is a breach of this Code of Behaviour.

### **7. Behaviour**

- a) Students are expected to be kind, courteous, trustworthy and respectful to each other, to all members of the School Community and to all those with whom they come into contact.
- b) Students are required to recognise the authority of the teachers in the school and to carry out instructions without challenge.



- c) Bullying, harassment or intimidation of fellow students or staff is strictly prohibited and constitutes a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- d) Students must behave in an appropriate manner in school, coming to and from school and on all school outings and occasions. The Code of Behaviour applies to students whether they are on school property and/or engaged in a school activity or not.
- e) Loitering in toilets, corridors or on the school grounds is strictly forbidden and is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- f) Students must attend classes with all materials required for class. Failure to do so is a breach of this Code of Behaviour. Borrowing of books or other materials is prohibited.
- g) Notes relating to sickness/homework, extracurricular activities etc. must be given to the teacher at the beginning of class.
- h) To answer questions or seek the teacher's attention in class students must raise a hand and wait for permission to speak.
- i) Students must not support or involve themselves in the disruptive behaviour of others in the class or in the school.
- j) Students must apply themselves fully to class work and respect the right of their fellow students to pursue their work without disturbance or distraction. Behaviour which is inappropriate or disrupts the education of fellow students is a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour.
- k) An immediate apology is required for an offence caused to a teacher or students in the classroom
- l) Eating or drinking in classrooms is prohibited except where there is a verified medical condition and/or the drinking of water is permitted by the teacher/supervisor in charge of the room.
- m) Students must not attempt any activity that might undermine the authority of the teacher/supervisor.
- n) Students are required to behave in an orderly fashion when on the school grounds.

## 8. Bullying

Each member of the school community has the right to remain free from bullying, racism, sexism, harassment and violence. All teachers, supervisors and school personnel take very seriously any incident of such behaviour, or any report of such behaviour, which may come to their attention.

Students are encouraged to an anti-bullying stance and to report cases of suspected bullying to teachers or other staff members. This information will be passed on to the school authorities. Parents who suspect their child might be a victim of bullying are encouraged to contact the school authorities who will deal sensitively with parental concerns.

## 9. Uniform & Dress Code

### *i. Uniform*

The school uniform has the support of the parents, teachers and the majority of the students in Balla Secondary School. It is therefore the intention of the school authorities that the school's uniform policy will be strictly enforced. The uniform is a visual symbol of the school and should be worn with respect and care by all students.

The school uniform is as follows:

<b>Girls:</b>	Grey uniform trousers or uniform skirt	<b>Boys:</b>	Grey uniform trousers
	Blue shirt		Blue shirt
	Navy blue V-neck jumper with school crest		Navy blue round neck jumper with school crest
	Plain <b>black</b> flat shoes		Plain <b>black</b> flat shoes

Uniform Jacket with school crest is optional. All items of personal property must be labelled.

Piercings: Small subtle stud piercings to ears are permitted. Any other form of piercings for boys/girls is not permitted.

Hair colour: Excessive, exuberant hair colours are not permitted.

Make up: Excessive make up is not permitted

- a) Students must wear the complete school uniform at all times during school hours, during the holding of in-house examinations and when engaged in activities organised by the school.
- b) Parents will be notified in advance of 'non-uniform' days or occasions on which students are not required to wear the school uniform.
- c) Breach of these rules as to school uniform is a breach of this Code of Behaviour. Breaches of these



uniform rules will be recorded in the School Journal of the student in question. This record of a breach of uniform rules must be signed by the parent/guardian and the student must present himself/herself in the correct uniform to the Year Head the following day.

- d) Further breaches of the Uniform Rules will be referred to the Deputy Principal and parents/guardians will be contacted.

**ii. Clarifications**

- a) A high standard of personal hygiene, cleanliness and neatness is expected of all students of Balla Secondary School
- b) Wearing of frayed trouser edges or slit trousers is not permitted.
- c) Jeans or denim garments are not permitted.
- d) T-Shirts worn under shirts or blouses must not be visible
- e) Sweatshirt, polo neck or hooded garments are not permitted.
- f) Only the prescribed uniform jacket may be worn in class. Caps/hats, scarves, gloves and fleeces are not permitted in class.

**10. Care of the School Environment**

We all expect to work in a pleasant environment, free from litter, graffiti, clutter and damaged property. The whole school community shares a responsibility for maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning.

**Personal and public property**

All are expected to respect the property of others and of the school. No one may interfere in any way with the belongings of anybody else. Vandalism and/or theft will not be tolerated.

• **Lockers**

Each student may rent a locker if they wish.

Students must keep all of their possessions either in the locker, which must be kept locked when not being accessed or in their school bags.

Books/belongings left elsewhere will be removed and a fine may apply to regain removed items.

Lockers may not be accessed between classes; students may collect all necessary books/equipment from the lockers only before first Class and during morning and lunch breaks.

**11. Health & Safety**

➤ **Driving**

Students are not permitted to drive on school grounds due to Health & Safety concerns for other students on the school avenues.

➤ **Substance Abuse**

The possession, use or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, solvents or illegal substances is strictly forbidden.

➤ **Smoking**

Smoking on school property/grounds is strictly prohibited by law.

➤ **CCTV:** There are a number of cameras distributed throughout the school grounds, both inside and outside the school building. School management reserves the right to use the cameras as an aid if required, when investigating a disciplinary procedure.

➤ **Out of Bounds**

Students may not access areas of the school/grounds that are deemed out of bounds

**12. Attendance and Punctuality**

- (i). Students are expected to be on time for school in the morning and for all classes. A student who arrives late for school must sign in, in the **late book** in the main office and obtain a **late stamp** in their journal. The late stamp should be shown to the class teacher when they arrive for class.



- 
- (ii). Students who are late for class will be spoken to by the class teacher. If the student persists in being late the teacher should fill out a penalty point sheet indicating details of times and dates of lateness. This sheet is to be given to the Year Head and disciplinary action will be taken.
- (iii). Students are expected to stay on the school grounds during the school day, unless given permission to leave.
- (iv). A student who wishes to leave school early must:
- Have a letter of permission or note in Journal signed by parent/guardian. This note must be left in the appropriate box in the main office.
  - The student must sign out in the **leaving early book** in the main office. If the student is attending an appointment and returns to school later that day he/she must sign in on their return to school
  - If a student wishes to leave school early without presenting a note, a parent/guardian must first phone the school to explain why the student is leaving early and **the parent/guardian must sign the student out in the leaving early book.**
  - Under no circumstances should a student sign out without a note/phone call from parent/guardian to the school or without seeking permission from Principal/Deputy Principal or Year Head.
- (v). Senior students (TY, 5<sup>th</sup> Year, LCA & LC) who wish to go down town for lunch must bring in a letter giving permission to do so signed by parent/guardian at the beginning of the school year.
- (vi). First, second and third year students may **not** leave the school grounds during lunch. They must bring a lunch to school or avail of the school canteen/shop service.
- (vii). Notification of late/absence from school:
- Every student must bring a note to explain the reason for any late/absence on the day following the lateness/absence.
  - There are specific absence sheets located at the back of the school journal for parents to detail the reason for their son/daughter's absence from school.
  - All notes must be left in the appropriate box in the main office.
  - Failure to do so will result in parents/guardians being contacted.

**Sanctions will apply where students are found to be in breach of the above.**

### **13. Outings, Activities and Tours**

The Code of Behaviour applies to all school outings, school related activities and to tours.

Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all tours and outings and both parents and students should sign the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times.

### **14. Sanctions**

When the Code of Behaviour has been breached some or all of the following strategies may be used as the school considers appropriate:

#### ***Sanctions Available to Teachers***

- Reasoning with the student
- Verbal reprimand
- Subject-related written assignment
- Change of seating arrangement in classroom
- Removal to another class for a class period by arrangement with the other teacher involved.
- Confiscation of items which are inappropriate, dangerous or the cause of distraction



- 
- Entry in the school journal of a student for the attention of the parents/guardians of the student. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign such entries in school journals.
  - Detention – to be arranged by the teacher who gives the detention.
  - Issuing of penalty points – accumulation of penalty points can lead to further sanctions.
  - Referral of student to Year Head. Year Head will be provided with a written report of behaviour and/or penalty points by the teacher making the referral.

#### ***Sanctions available to Year Head***

- Lunchtime detention
- Assignment of written task related to the behaviour incident.
- Suspension of or withdrawal of privileges.
- Issue of Report card to student. The report card must be presented by the student to the teacher at the beginning of every class. The teacher's comments & signatures will be recorded at the end of each class period and must be signed by a parent/guardian each night. The student will return it to the Year Head after five days. The student will remain on report at the discretion of the Year Head.

#### ***Sanctions Available to Deputy Principal***

In addition to sanctions listed above:

- Internal Suspension.
- Request to parents/guardians to attend at the school to discuss disciplinary issues concerning their child.
- Referral to the Principal.

#### ***Sanctions Available to the Principal***

In addition to sanctions described above:

- Immediate removal of a student from the school in the circumstances outlined below.
- Suspension for a period not exceeding three school days in accordance with the procedure set out below.
- Where the sanction imposed consists of lunch time detention, parents/guardians will be notified in the Journal that such detention has been imposed and the reason for same. This notification will be made prior to the date on which detention will take place.
- Written records and/or incident reports as appropriate will be kept in relation to breaches of the Code of Behaviour and measures taken in response to same.
- Where a student's behaviour warrants suspension or expulsion the following procedures will apply:
  - The school authorities will notify parents/guardians of their concerns and request that they advise the student appropriately.
  - Parents/guardians will be requested to come to the school to meet with the school authorities who may include the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head. Parents/guardians will be given as much notification in advance of this meeting as is reasonably possible. Teaching staff that have had dealings with the student concerned may also be requested to attend this meeting.
- The sanctions described above may be implemented at any stage in this process.
- On completion of the steps outlined above, the Principal may suspend a student for up to three school days. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Board of Management. Where such an appeal is taken the suspension will not take effect until after the meeting of the Board of Management at which the appeal is heard.
- Where a student's behaviour justifies a period of suspension exceeding three school days, or where such behaviour justifies expulsion, parents/guardians will be requested to attend with the student at a meeting of the Board of Management to discuss the student's ongoing participation in the school. Teaching staff that have had dealings with the student concerned may also be requested to attend this meeting as appropriate.
- If the Board of Management, on completion of the procedure outlined in the preceding paragraph, decides to suspend or expel a student, parents/guardians, or ( in the case of a student who is over the age of 18) the student, may appeal the decision to the Department of Education and Science pursuant to section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- The Principal may also suspend a student with immediate effect in the following circumstances:
  - where he/she considers that the student's behaviour is a threat to the safety, welfare and/or property of other members of the school community; or
  - where the student is guilty of serious misbehaviour as defined below; or



- 
- Where the Principal considers that suspension of the student is necessary to maintain discipline within the school.
  - If a student is suspended with immediate effect in the circumstances outlined in the preceding paragraph, the procedures set out for suspension above are to be complied with as soon as is reasonably possible after suspension is imposed.
  - Where a student is suspended parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the reason for the suspension, the period of suspension, the condition(s) which will justify the lifting of the suspension and the fact that the student will be regarded as in the care of his parents/guardians from the end of the school day on which the suspension is imposed.
  - A notice of suspension will set out the conditions which must be fulfilled before the suspended student is permitted to return to the school. Conditions which may be imposed include one or more of the following:
    - written undertakings by the student to be of good behaviour,
    - return to school subject to loss of specified privileges,
    - a successful appeal to the Board of Management (if the suspension is imposed by the Principal) or to the Department of Education and Science (if the suspension is imposed by the Board of Management),
    - the expiry of the time for which the suspension is stated to apply,
    - re-admission to the school on successful application to the Board of Management.
  - The foregoing are merely examples of conditions which may be attached to suspensions and are without prejudice to the school's right to impose different conditions as appropriate.
  - Where the Board of Management decides to expel a student, parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the expulsion, the reason for the same and the fact the student will be regarded as in the care of the parents/guardians from the end of the school day on which the expulsion is imposed.
  - While suspension and expulsion are generally used only when all other options have been exhausted, a student may be suspended or expelled for a single serious breach of discipline or for consistent breaches of discipline of a less serious nature.
  - The following constitute 'serious misbehaviour':
    - Behaviour which disrupts the learning of other students,
    - Acts of violence towards any person, whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
    - Behaviour which is threatening towards any person, whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
    - Interference with another person's property including property belonging to the school,
    - Interference with emergency equipment, e.g. fire alarms, fire extinguishers etc.,
    - Breaches of the school's policy regarding substance abuse, whether occurring on school property and/or during a school activity or not,
    - Bullying,
    - Possession of a dangerous item/substance on the school grounds,
    - Behaviour described as a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour elsewhere in the Code.
    - The definition of a serious breach of discipline includes (but is not limited to) the examples given above. The school reserves the right to deal with eventualities which are not specified in this Code of Behaviour by the adoption of normal standards, in accordance with natural justice and in the best interests of all the members of the school community.
  - Appeals to the Board of Management must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board.
  - Sanctions should be used in a way that:
    - will defuse and not escalate a situation
    - preserve the dignity of all parties
    - be applied in a fair and consistent way
    - be timely

Teachers and/or Year Heads may refer students to members of the Pastoral Care Team for help and advice.

Written records will be kept in relation to breaches of the Code of Behaviour and of measures taken in response to same.

## **15. Expulsion**





- A student will only be expelled from the school when all other sanctions and procedures have been exhausted and there is a complete failure of the student to respond in any way to the school's attempts to encourage acceptable behaviour.
- This will only be done in full consultation with parents

Any decision of the BOM to expel a student may be appealed under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, as explained.

The following behaviours, however, may be grounds for automatic expulsion, even if for a first offence, and after the following of due process and fair procedures:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault.

In considering the expulsion of a student, the following factors will be relevant:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions tried to date.
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of expulsion.

Summary of procedures in respect of expulsion:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal that will allow for the student and his/her parents to be given every opportunity to respond to the alleged misbehaviour
2. A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal and the allowing of the parents to attend the relevant part of that BOM meeting and/or to make a written and/or oral submission to the BOM
3. Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a special hearing to consider expelling a student
4. BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing including the informing of parents and the Educational Welfare Officer (if expulsion is being recommended)
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer – 20 days must be allowed for this stage
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

The full procedures to be followed by the BOM in the case of expulsion are set out in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools", NEWB, May 2008.

## **16. Appeals Procedure**

Under Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998:

- (a) 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 BOM against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,
- (b) Grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a) of Section 29), shall be heard,
- (c) 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:

- (i) Where the Board permanently excludes a student from the school.
- (ii) Where a student is suspended for a period of 20 days or more in one school year.
- (iii) 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.



---

### **17. Modification Clause**

The BOM of this school reserves the right to modify the details of the Code of Behaviour at short notice in response to events or circumstances that were not foreseeable when the Code was being first drafted or subsequently reviewed. Notification of such modification will be made to all the partners in our school community prior to it becoming operational.

### **18. Concerns/complaints**

Any member of the school community who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of this code should contact the Principal in confidence.

The school is obliged under Section 23(4) of the Education Welfare Act 2000 to provide a Parent/Guardian with a copy of the Code of Behaviour of the school before registration. Parents/Guardians who enrol their son/daughter at Balla Secondary School are required to undertake that they accept the Code of Behaviour of the school and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their son/daughter will comply with the code.

By choosing Balla Secondary School for your son/daughter's education it is assumed that you accept the pastoral care structure and the ethos of our school and are prepared to be bound by the Code of Behaviour, School Regulations and Disciplinary Procedures.