

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

No school can function without discipline, but young people cannot develop unless given a degree of freedom appropriate to their level of maturity. We strive to maintain a good balance between freedom and restraint, and we provide a secure framework of a clearly delineated and well-defined Code of Behaviour within which the school rules are deployed. This disciplinary ethos is based on co-operation between students and teachers. A student's attendance at the school shall imply acceptance, of and respect for, the Code of Behaviour and the school rules in their entirety.

Lapses in this co-operation can result in breaches of school discipline. The most serious of these - vandalism, theft, substance abuse, malicious injury, violent behaviour, inappropriate sexual behaviour, repeatedly defying or swearing at a teacher, repeated or serious bullying - will not be tolerated. Any student found to be in breach of the rules may be expelled depending on the seriousness and frequency of the misdemeanour. In the rare event of a very serious breach of the rules, the DGS Board of Governors, as the ultimate authority, reserves the right to ask any student to leave.

The Code of Behaviour is designed so that all students will have care, concern and respect for the safety and well-being of all persons living in, attending and working in the school. High standards of self-respect and respect for others are expected. This will be shown through high personal standards of honesty, courtesy and consideration for others at all times, co-operation, punctuality, good dress/presentation and hygiene.

### **GENERAL**

- 1 It is the responsibility of every student to know and to obey the rules of the school. School rules apply on school premises, on the way to and from school, on school-sponsored trips and sports activities in this country and abroad, and on any occasion when the student is in school uniform or otherwise associated with the school.
- 2 The behaviour of all students at the end of the academic year is expected to correspond to the standard required at any other time of year. End-of-year misbehaviour is not tolerated, and sanctions for such misbehaviour may include expulsion. If appropriate, a school reference may be withheld.
- 3 All school rules apply to State Examination candidates while the examinations are in progress.
- 4 School trips, holidays, excursions and extra-curricular activities are organised from time to time to a wide variety of destinations. The staff who supervise these trips and activities do so voluntarily and in the interests of the students. It is, therefore, very important that they are not put under stress in such circumstances. Students are expected to behave in an exemplary manner while on trips and when participating in activities. All school rules with regard to alcohol, smoking, drug abuse, vandalism, general behaviour and courtesy apply fully. Staff are authorised to make special arrangements to send misbehaving students home, at the expense of their parents. This may involve rearranged flights if the trip is abroad.

If a student misbehaves while on a trip or activity, a record of such misbehaviour will be kept by the school and the incident(s) reviewed by the Year Head(s). Normal sanctions will be applied, up to and including suspension and expulsion in serious cases. Trips and activities are a privilege, not a right. If necessary, the school may refuse permission to participate if a student disrupts normal class, has misbehaved on a previous trip or generally has a poor disciplinary record. In this instance, parents will be informed by letter, a copy of which will be retained in the student's file.

- 5 The school reserves the right to discipline students for any unforeseen unacceptable behaviour.

## **UNIFORM**

- 6 Correct uniform, as defined in the school's Uniform Code, must be worn travelling to and from school, during the school day, during the State Examinations and for sports. School uniform is also required on school trips, matches and other events at which the school is represented, unless students are informed otherwise.
- 7 Students must comply with the school's Uniform Code. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that uniform is always correct and clean, in good repair and worn neatly. Students are expected to have recourse to spare items of uniform in the event of clothing or footwear being soiled or lost. Non-uniform items of clothing are not permitted and may be confiscated. A student will be given a verbal warning for the first entry in the School Uniform Folder; after a second entry a letter will be sent to parents; a third entry will merit a one hour Friday detention, and parents will be informed. The school reserves the right to remove from class any student whose dress/appearance does not conform to the Uniform Code.

## **SCHOOL HOURS/PUNCTUALITY**

- 8 School hours are from 8.50am each morning until 3.55pm in the afternoon, except for Wednesday and Friday when class finishes at 2.35pm on a Wednesday to facilitate games and other extra-curricular activities, and Friday at 3.15pm. Students should be in school no later than 8.45am so that books can be organised before Assembly or Form Class, which start at 8.50am. Day students must leave the school premises after class (3.55pm, except 2.35pm on Wednesdays and 3.15pm on Fridays) unless they are directly involved in after school activities under the supervision of a member of staff. Students are asked to return home directly without delaying in the local shopping centres.
- 9 Punctuality is essential for Morning Assembly (8.45am), for all classes and for all school events. Should a student be persistently late to class or assembly (with 3 or more lates) they will be given a lunchtime detention. Failure to attend will result in a 1 hour Friday afternoon detention from 3.15pm-4.15pm. Further sanctions may be imposed should there be no improvement.
- 10 All students must attend Morning Assembly or Form Class at 8.45am. Assembly combines a short act of worship with daily announcements. Silence and good order are expected.
- 11 The morning roll is taken at Assembly/Form Class. It is every student's responsibility to see that s(he) is marked present each day. If late, students should register "late" at Assembly/Form Class before 9.00am, and at the school office if later than 9.00am. Parent/ Guardian shall be notified by text indicating that their son/s /daughter/s are recorded as absent.
- 12 Students not be absent on holidays during term time of the standardised school year. Where a student is absent for twenty days or more in any school year the school is required to inform the TUSLA (Child and Family Agency)
- 13 As far as possible, appointments (medical, dental, etc.) should be made for out-of-school hours. When an appointment is unavoidable in class time, the school should be informed in writing in advance. For other absences, a note from a parent or guardian, giving a reason for the absence, must be handed into the school office on the day the student returns. (The back of the school journal contains tear off slips that should be completed and returned to the main school office under the appropriate headings. Permission to leave, absence notes or late notes.) It is most important that students are not absent from school during examination weeks. Arrangements will not normally be made to permit students to sit papers outside the standard examination timetable.
- 14 When students are on the school premises, the Headmaster and staff assume a legal duty of care. No student may leave the school premises during the day, including break and lunchtime, without the express permission of the Headmaster, Deputy Principal or Head of Boarding. Having received permission, the student must sign out in the book kept at the school office for this purpose and sign in on their return. A note from parents does not in itself permit a student to leave the school grounds. If a student leaves the

school premises without permission, the school is then unable to discharge its duty of care, and can accept no liability in case of accident or injury. Any breach of this regulation may result in suspension.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 15 Students must not run in the school buildings or between them. They must not congregate in traffic areas, e.g. the Bell Corridor or the hallway in the Harper or Swan Buildings. Queues must be single line with no jostling or queue-jumping.
- 16 Outdoor and indoor traffic areas must be kept clear of bags and personal items.
- 17 The neatness and cleanliness of classrooms and other school buildings are the responsibility of the student body. Litter bins are provided in classrooms and around the school and should be used. If students are asked to pick up litter they must co-operate, whether or not they dropped it. Tippex, chewing gum and permanent markers are forbidden on the campus. A sanction of one hour's detention will apply for chewing gum.
- 18 Students will be made aware of particular Codes of Discipline in all areas, particularly in specialist rooms such as the laboratories, the library, Home Economics room, Woodwork room or Art room. Compliance with these codes is essential for good order and safety.
- 19 The Headmaster, and/or Head of Boarding must be notified in all cases where a student is taking prescribed drugs at school.
- 20 Students are not permitted to park cars or motor cycles on the school grounds without permission from the Headmaster. Anyone who seeks permission must supply the car's registration number and evidence of current insurance. Where permission has been granted, the vehicle concerned must be parked in the area designated by the Headmaster and display the official school parking permit. Spaces are subject to availability. Students may not offer transport to other students to or from school or to school-related events without the explicit written permission of all parents concerned, copies of which should be lodged with the Headmaster at least 48 hours in advance. Cyclists are strongly encouraged to wear helmets, to use reflective bands and to lock bicycles in the appropriate places provided for their storage.
- 21 Smoking by students and the possession of tobacco, lighters, e-cigarettes etc., whether in school or travelling to or from school, or on any trip or school-related activity in this country or abroad will lead to two days' suspension for a first offence. Subsequent offences may incur suspension of a longer duration. Expulsion will be considered for repeat offenders. (See *Policy on Substance Use*). Students found in the company of a smoker may also expect to be sanctioned.
- 22 The possession or consumption of alcohol in school, in school uniform or on school related activities in this country and abroad is strictly forbidden, regardless of the student's age. Nor may any student enter a licensed premises, buy or consume alcohol whilst in school uniform or otherwise clearly identified as a student of the school. Any breach of this rule will be considered a serious disciplinary matter and will automatically incur a minimum of three days' suspension. Repeat offending will be considered as worthy of expulsion. (See *Policy on Substance Use*).
- 23 The school sees the abuse of narcotics as an extremely damaging personal choice which its students must not make. This type of abuse is all the more dangerous as the abuser usually encourages others. It is made clear to students that the school cannot permit drug offences and that anyone who presents a threat to the school, by introducing drugs in any form whatsoever, can expect to be expelled. The school draws no distinction between hard and soft drugs. In the case of any student found using illegal drugs, in possession of them, supplying them to another student or under the influence of them while in school, the school reserves the right to involve the Garda Síochána and the parents of the student, offering advice to the parents on where to obtain expert professional help. (See *Policy on Substance Use*).

- 24 No student may have in his or her possession at any time a firearm, fireworks, knife or blade of any size, laser or other offensive weapon of any sort. Students are expected to behave at all times in a manner which will not put others at risk.
- 25 Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including, but not limited to material in relation to staff and students, where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person it is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. *As part of such disciplinary action the school reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.*
- 26 The school community believes that each student has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation. Bullying is not tolerated. A confidential disclosure policy is encouraged for any student who feels exposed to any type of bullying behaviour. This applies equally to any other student being subjected to, or who witnesses any other student being subjected to, behaviour such as name-calling, threats, humiliation, intimidation, physical violence or social exclusion. The student is advised to inform his/her Form teacher or any member of staff or to place a confidential complaint/report in the box on the ledge outside the Headmaster's office. Enquiries will be made in a manner that respects the confidentiality of the initial complainant. Parents should feel free to approach the school at any time if they feel concerned about bullying issues. A school anti-bullying policy is in operation.

#### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 27 Basic good practice in the classroom will include punctual arrival; having correct texts, copies and equipment; properly completed homework; a general willingness to participate without answering out of turn; prompt completion of class work; and overall respect for the classroom processes of teaching and learning. Within and outside class, students are expected to comply promptly with the instructions and decisions of their teachers. A bottle of water is permitted in the classroom, but otherwise no food or drink.
- 28 It is school policy that homework will be set on each of the five school days. Work must be accurately recorded in the student's journal and must be ready for the set date. Boarding students must prepare their work during evening study (two hours for 1<sup>st</sup> Year, up to three hours for 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Years); day students are likewise expected to allocate sufficient time for thorough preparation of homework. Students must ensure that they keep a clean journal. They should have the journal with them in all classes as teaching staff may wish to inspect it.
- 29 Laptops may be used with the permission of the teacher in charge of the class, study hall or prep on the basis that the student's laptop screen is readily visible to the teacher. Students are reminded of the conditions of the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Computer and Internet Usage.
- 30 Students must have their clothes, appropriate books and equipment clearly identified, and are expected to be responsible at all times for the maintenance and safe-keeping of these and other personal possessions. Students should not leave money or valuables, e.g. laptops, unattended at any time. The school will not accept responsibility for any loss or damage incurred. (Parents are advised to check the extent /conditions of cover on their home contents insurance policy.) The school operates a Lost Property office.
- 31 A book locker is assigned to each student, who may go to this locker before Assembly (before 8.50am.), at break, during lunch-break and after school. The school is not responsible for students' books or other property stored on the premises. A sports locker is also available if required. All lockers must be emptied at the end of each term. Lockers remain the property of the school and must not be used for any purpose contrary to school rules. Lockers may be searched randomly or as required by appropriate school staff with the authority of the Headmaster. This may be in the presence of the relevant student or not, at the Headmaster's discretion. Searching of lockers must be sanctioned by the Headmaster, Deputy Principal or Head of Boarding and carried out in the presence of not less than two members of staff.

- 32 Honesty is expected at all times, and students are expected to prepare their homework and sit all examinations without copying or cheating. Students are advised to seek clear instructions from teachers where group or team work is scheduled to ensure their position is not compromised, especially with regard to project work for State Examinations.
- 33 The use of mobile phones and personal music/entertainment equipment must not be used during the school day. That is, from 8.50am to 3.55pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 8.50am to 2.35pm on Wednesday and 8.50am to 3.15pm on Friday. Devices must be switched off and kept out of sight during the school day. The taking and transmission of photographs by mobiles is not allowed while on the school premises or at school related activities elsewhere, nor is the possession or circulation of any inappropriate images. Phones/music equipment used inappropriately will be confiscated and held for a minimum of one day. The confiscated phone will be logged in our records and left in a named envelope in the school office. Please note that they should be collected from the school office at the end of the school day and no later than 4.30pm. An automatic afterschool detention on Friday from 3.15pm – 4.15p applies. (Failure to follow these instructions will result in further sanctions as outlined in the Code of Behaviour.).
- 34 Repeated offences may result in suspension and a request that their mobile phone/ personal music/entertainment equipment be permanently left at home.
- 35 Students may not arrange for the delivery of any goods to the school.
- 36 Students are personally responsible for all damage they may do to property whether accidental or otherwise. Parents are liable for costs incurred, and will be billed as appropriate.
- 37 Students' friends from outside the school (i.e. not enrolled in DGS) may not enter school grounds or premises except to attend events for which invitations have been issued.

### **THE CODE IN PRACTICE**

While the Code of Behaviour applies in the context of school activity as a whole, for practical purposes the operation of the disciplinary process associated with this Code of Behaviour makes the distinction between classroom discipline and general school discipline.

### **Classroom Discipline**

Generally the subject teacher will deal with work/behavioural problems such as:

- homework not done
- poor effort in class
- arriving late to class
- lack of correct books/equipment
- talking in class/other disruption
- bad language/inappropriate comments
- rudeness
- graffiti /vandalism
- use of mobile phones or any electronic equipment
- uniform/make-up/accessories

The usual sanction for less serious problems will be a reprimand and a warning from the subject teacher who may also write in the student's journal. This note must be countersigned by a parent.

Repeated or more serious problems will lead to an entry under the student's name in his/her Form class book. The subject teacher may also telephone or send a letter to the parents detailing unsatisfactory effort or behaviour.

If there is no improvement, the subject teacher will consult the Form teacher who will discuss the issue with the student, issue a further reprimand or warning, contact the parents, inform the Year Head, and the Guidance Counsellor where appropriate.

If problems persist, the Year Head will meet the student and may, as appropriate:

- issue a report card
- set detention (Friday 3.15pm – 4.45pm; parents are informed by letter)
- seek a meeting with parents
- recommend suspension or other sanction

The Year Head will keep other pastoral care personnel informed.

### **Minor Misdemeanours Outside The Classroom**

In general the staff members present will deal with disciplinary problems, for example at break, lunchtime, school trips and events. The first sanction for minor misdemeanours will be a reprimand and a warning from the teacher dealing with the matter. If deemed necessary the incident will be reported to the appropriate Form teacher(s) and entered in the student's Form class book.

### **Serious Breaches Of School Discipline**

Major incidents such as:

- serious disruption of class
- abusive behaviour to staff or other pupils
- violent behaviour
- not attending classes
- leaving school premises without permission
- bullying of staff or pupils
- abuse/destruction of property
- theft
- smoking, drinking or substance abuse

will be dealt with by the Year Head(s) and/or Deputy Principal/Headmaster and outside agencies where appropriate.

The procedure for dealing with serious breaches of school discipline will be as follows:

- students concerned will be interviewed, where possible by two teachers. Where appropriate, reports will be sought from all relevant parties
- if appropriate, the Headmaster may decide to suspend a student. Parents will be informed of this decision in writing. If the suspension is to be immediate, parents will be informed by telephone, but the reasons for suspension will be notified by letter as soon as practical. In the case of a suspension of more than six days, or where the student has been suspended for more than twenty days in the school year to date, the TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) must also be informed
- parents have the right to appeal a suspension, and, in the case of a successful appeal, the suspension will be removed from the student's record in the school
- in more serious cases, the Headmaster may recommend expulsion to the Board of Governors. Parents will be informed of this and will be provided with a full written description of the allegations against the

student and the case being made to the Board. They will then be invited to make a written submission to an emergency meeting of the Board

- parents, and the student if aged eighteen and over, will be invited to attend the meeting and will be present when the Headmaster outlines the case against the student. The parents will have an opportunity to respond, after which the student, parents and the Headmaster will withdraw from the meeting. The Board will consider the evidence presented and will make a decision at the earliest possible opportunity. This decision will be communicated formally to the parents by the Secretary of the Board. Where a decision to expel has been made, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed under Section 24 (i) of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Parents will also be informed of their right to appeal under Section 29 of the National Education Welfare Act.