



**PORTUMNA  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

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Revised Code of Conduct

Version 2.1

<b>Date of approval by Board of Management</b>	August 2020
<b>Next date of review by Board of Management</b>	May 2021

## *MISSION STATEMENT*

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*We are a Community School committed to;*

*. . the provision of a comprehensive educational system available to all.*

*. . the recognition and development of each student's social, intellectual, physical and spiritual potential.*

*. . the achievement of high standards in teaching, learning and performance.*

*. . the establishment and maintenance of a co-operative, supportive partnership between school, home and community.*

*. . the professional development of staff.*

## *RATIONALE:*

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This revised Code of Conduct has been drawn up in the light of the Guidelines for Schools issued by the National Educational Welfare Board. Students, Parents and Staff have been consulted in the preparation of this document which will be reviewed by the Board of Management in May 2021.

In keeping with the NEWB guidelines, this Code specifies the standards that are expected, the measures that may be taken for breach of these standards, procedures in relation to suspension and expulsion, the grounds for removing a suspension and the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

Rules are necessary to facilitate the smooth running of the school and to enable every student to have access to a good education.

Effective order in a school helps to create a vision and establish a climate for people to achieve their highest level of potential, their personal best.

This Code of Conduct applies equally to all students in the school and its procedures are to be followed in respect of all students. The Principal retains a discretionary judgement in the application of this code in particular circumstances.

This Code of Conduct applies to all school activities, outings, trips and occasions whenever these occur.

## *STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR THAT ARE EXPECTED*

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### Attendance and Punctuality

(1) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to be in attendance every day, and to be in the correct classroom in time for the commencement of each class. As, school starts at 9.00am. You will be deemed late if you arrive to school after this time. If this is the case, you must sign in at the front office (3 lates=1 after school detention)

All Junior students (1st to 3rd year) remain on the school grounds during lunch. Failure to abide to the above will result in a sanction.

This means:

- You are expected to be on time for school each day and to be on time for each class throughout the school-day.
- You provide a note from your parents / guardian explaining any unavoidable absences.
- You are expected to move from one class to another quickly and with care without visiting toilets or lockers etc.

Because:

- It is difficult for a student to 'catch-up' on topics taught in class while he/ she was absent.
- The school has a duty-of-care to its students
- A student arriving late unfairly disrupts the teaching / learning of others in the class.

## (2) School Journal

All students of Portumna Community School are expected to have the official School Journal in all classes and to present it to a teacher when requested.

This means:

- You are expected to place the School Journal in front of you on your desk at the beginning of each class.
- You are expected to record your homework/ assignments in the journal during each class.
- You are required to maintain your School Journal in pristine condition so as to allow for easy inspection by your parents/ guardian or teachers.

Because:

- The School Journal is the primary method of communication between the school and home.
- It is important to maintain an accurate record of work assigned during the year to aid you with your revision at the end of each school year.
- Absences from school and/or class will be recorded in your School Journal.

(3) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to strive for academic excellence (i.e. Students will always try to do their best at class-work and at homework).

This means:

- You retain the official School Journal to record homework.
- You do (written and non-written) homework every night.
- You listen to teachers, obey class procedures and ensure your behaviour never disrupts the learning of others.

Because:

- The School Journal is often used by teachers to record comments: for persistent beaches it may be examined and signed weekly by Year Heads and Parents / Guardians.
- Homework reinforces and backs-up what has been done in class and helps prepare for exams.
- Disruptive behaviour is unfair to others who are trying to learn

(4) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to be properly prepared for each subject and each class.

This means:

- You have the proper pens, pencils, copies, textbooks, materials, etc. as told to you by your teacher. You have any special equipment needed for particular subjects; e.g. P.E. gear, drawing equipment, etc.
- You can access your locker only at the following times:

(i) before 1st class, (ii) during 'little-break', and (iii) during lunch.

At these times you bring all the materials needed for the 3-classes that follow ensuring you are at class on time.

As:

- Full and proper participation in class is not possible without necessary materials.
- A student is often easily distracted if he/she is in class without all necessary materials.
- Class learning / teaching for others in the class is unfairly disrupted when a student arrives late for class.

(5) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to wear full school uniform and to be groomed in accordance with school Uniform Policy.

This means:

- You are expected to maintain the school's reputation and high standards by the manner in which you wear your uniform. Your appearance reflects positively on yourself, your family and your school.

Because:

- Members of the public associate you with the school and regard you as its representative.
- The uniform has been agreed by parents, students and school authorities,
- The uniform ensures all students are treated equally.

(6) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to show courtesy manners and respect to people (students, staff, visitors, etc.) at all times and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority.

This means:

- You are on the 'look-out-for' and you are supportive of your fellow student(s).
- You avoid engaging in any form of bullying, intimidation or 'picking-on' other people.
- You avoid arranging for others to bully, intimidate or 'pick-on' other people.
- You avoid fighting and/or you will avoid arranging fights in the school or elsewhere.
- When in the school building you will walk and also you will refrain from and help to prevent running, jostling, pushing, shoving, etc.
- You extend courtesy, manners, and respect to all people.
- You follow the instructions of teachers and others in authority without causing any disruption and you never leave class without permission. If a student leaves class without permission a parent/guardian will be called to collect the student due to health and safety risks caused by the student being unsupervised. The student may also be given an internal suspension if deemed appropriate:

*Internal Suspensions:* The purpose of an internal suspension is to allow for a student to reflect on their actions, to catch up on work missed by removing themselves from class and the possibility to speak to relevant teachers/ management to help restore the situation. Internal suspensions may also be used in other situations if deemed appropriate and/ or on Health & Safety grounds. Likewise, suspensions may also be incurred for the above situations if it is deemed to be more appropriate than an internal suspension or if the actions are considered more serious or if the actions were repeated or consistent with other infringements of our Code.

- You refrain from using bad and inappropriate language in class and on the school grounds.

This applies at all times including when you are in class, on the school premises, when on school related activities such as games, tours, debates, theatre visits, etc. Students are also expected to show courtesy to teachers and fellow students outside of school time's to avoid behaviours which may have a negative on them when they are in school.

If students use bad/inappropriate language in class or anywhere on the school grounds they will be placed on detention. If bad language is directed at a teacher the sanction of suspension may apply.

Because:

- EVERY PERSON is at all times entitled to the dignity of being treated with courtesy, manners and respect by other people (students, teachers, etc.).
- The students in a class are being denied their education if/when their teacher is being disrupted.
- Everyone is required to play his/her part in making the school a safe and happy place, free from any fear, misery, hurt and injury which might otherwise be present.

(7) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to respect school property and the property of others and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

This means:

- You refrain from any attempt at destroying, defacing (i.e. graffiti), damaging and /or vandalising either school property (buildings, plant, equipment, fittings, materials, shrubs, trees, etc.) or the property of others (clothing, books, equipment, cars. etc.)
- You refrain from littering any area of the school grounds and its environs.

Because:

- Improved standards of cleanliness reflect well on the school, its students and its staff.
- It enables everyone to work and to study in a cleaner, healthier and more pleasant environment.
- The cost of replacing and/or repairing property / plants can be a burden on the school and parents/guardians.
- Health and Safety grounds.

(8) All students of Portumna Community are expected to eat/drink only in designated areas and only at allocated times and to refrain entirely from using ‘chewing gum’

This means:

- You eat/drink only in designated areas and only at designated times.

List of designated areas: School canteen, Room M and outside of the school building.

- You refrain entirely from chewing gum on the school premises and properly dispose of chewing-gum (i.e., in litter bins) as you enter the school building.
- Water/Flavoured water is the only drink permitted (Note: At the class teacher’s discretion).

Because:

- Eating/drinking other than in designated areas and at designated times causes disruption and the mess created often damages books, copies etc.
- When ‘stuck’ underneath desks, tables, chairs etc. chewing-gum is very unhygienic
- Soft drinks are not good for student’s health. Drinking water promotes good health but also allows the opportunity for Portumna Community School to encourage a lifestyle away from obesity.
- Significant additional expense is incurred when cleaning up food, drink and chewing gum if consumed throughout the school building.

(9) All students of Portumna Community School are expected to observe the law relating to smoking and illicit drugs and substances.

This means:

You must refrain from smoking, consuming, possessing, supplying and / or arranging for the supply of cigarettes (including e-cigarettes), alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances within the school and its environs.

Because:

- It is against the law.
- The school grounds and buildings are a smoke-free zone
- It runs counter to health & safety and moral issues; especially the potential for addiction, serious ill-health and death.

(10) All students of Portumna Community School are not allowed to have mobile phones on school property (Ref: Mobile Phone Policy)

This means:

- You are not allowed to use mobile phones in the school building/school grounds.
- You do not borrow some other person's mobile telephone and use it.
- You are not permitted to use a camera phone for taking pictures on school grounds.
- You are not allowed to use recording equipment on school grounds.
- You are not allowed to contact parents/guardians or other people using your own or another person's mobile phone or device.

Because:

- Mobile phones cause disruption.
  - Mobile phones can be used for intimidating, bullying or demeaning other people.
  - The school telephone can be used for urgent communication with parents/guardians and is the only mode of communication permissible.
  - It is illegal to photograph/ record any individual without the express permission of that individual
- Mobile phones and other devices seen or heard between 8.55am- 3.55 pm will be confiscated, put into an envelope and left with the Deputy Principal. The SIM Card will also be confiscated. First offence- the phone will be confiscated for 24 hours. If a second offence should occur Parents/ Guardians may collect the phone and SIM Card in the Office by prior arrangement after 7 days. Parents/ Guardians must sign stating that they have read the school's ICT Acceptable Use and Mobile Phone Policy. A copy of each will be left in the Main Office. (See Mobile Phone Policy)

*Note: In cases of rare exceptional circumstances, with permission sought by Principal, the use of phones may be permitted e.g: Tackle Your Feelings TY Programme*

## ***IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR***

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Procedures to deal with behavioural issues or Ladder of Intervention<sup>1</sup>

These procedures have been guided by the NEWB Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour.

### **Stage 1: Ladder of Intervention: Class Teacher**

All Teachers are responsible for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and share, with other teachers a common responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds and on school outings.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1: Ladder of Referral

(a) When inappropriate behaviour occurs use positive intervention strategies as suggested on the ladder. When issuing a sanction Teachers should follow the NEWB guidelines regarding “Good practice in the use of sanctions”

(Adapted from NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (2007))

(b) If behaviour persists record the incident. Teacher records the intervention and sanction in their own notes and in the student’s school journal and or VSWare. Discuss with student their behaviour to ascertain if there are reasons behind their behaviour. (Seek advice from the Year Head if you feel pastoral intervention is needed)

### ***Students with special educational needs (SEN)***

***(Adapted from NEWB Guidelines)***

Sanctions should be used in a way that ensures that: Sanctions are a part of a plan to change behaviour  
A sanction is a form of positive intervention. However, sanctions are unlikely on their own to change behaviour. They should be used a part of a wider plan to help the student to learn.

A sanction should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

In particular a sanction should:

- Defuse and not escalate a situation
- Preserve the dignity of all parties
- Be applied in a fair and consistent way
- Be timely

Sanctions may be needed to help a student with special educational needs (SEN) to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student.

However, teachers should take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Students with SEN may require help to understand and observe the Code of Positive Behaviour. For instance, students with SEN may need to be taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour in more tangible ways, for example through pictures, film or role-play. They may not be able to predict consequences as easily as their peers and so may be vulnerable.

The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs. Teachers should liaise with SEN coordinator/ SEN team and/or Year Head regarding students with identified special educational needs.

### ***Note: Year Head***

Primarily the Year Head monitors the educational progress of each student within a pastoral context. They regularly liaise with the school’s SMT informing them of any concern academically or pastorally that they have in relation to a student(s) in their year group.

The Year Head will be responsible for:

Monitoring the school Journal. Journals will be checked once a week where possible, giving the Year Head an opportunity to review correspondence between school and home. It also affords an opportunity to check that homework is being written in properly. Please provide Year Heads with absent notes/late notes.

- Delivering assemblies on common themes and year group specific topics
- Supporting students who the Student Support Team or Management Team have identified as a Focus IN/OUT.
- Lending a listening ear to student’s concerns.
- Liaising with Guidance Counsellor/ Student Support team if deemed appropriate or necessary.
- Checking uniform

- Correspondence with home.
- Checking lockers. If a student presents with an organisational issue the YH may help organise the student's locker, showing the student how to manage themselves.
- Explaining the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- Bringing attendance and punctuality issues to the attention of the Parent/Guardian.
- Discussing behaviour and academic progress with student suggesting ways for the child to improve.

(c) Where there have been a number of incidents and the class teacher has exhausted positive intervention strategies the class teacher makes a referral to the Year Head by completing a Year Head referral form.

A Year Head Referral means that the matter is being brought to the attention of the Year Head via a Year Head Referral Form<sup>2</sup>. One copy goes to the Year Head, one to be kept by the teacher and one goes into the students file.

(d) The class teacher writes a note on VS Ware stating YH referral and also writes a note into the student's journal informing parents of referral.

### ***Major Incident Referrals***

(a) A teacher refers an Incident Referral Form directly to the Year Head.

Please Note: AN INCIDENT REFERRAL FORM MAY BE GIVEN BY TEACHER FOR BEHAVIOUR OBSERVED BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.

SUCH BEHAVIOUR MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: VIOLENT/ AGGRESSIVE/ THREATENING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS STUDENTS OR STAFF/ STEALING, DAMAGE TO PROPERTY/ SUBSTANCE ABUSE/ BLATANT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR/ LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION

N.B: It is not possible to cover all possible infringements of behaviour and their eventual sanctions. The Board of Management reserves the right to interpret the above and to make the final decision.

### **Stage 2: Ladder of Referral: Year Head**

The Year Heads' role is to follow on from Stage 1. They are to link with class teachers, parents and management.

STAGE 2 REFERRALS (YH Referrals):

(a)The Year Head receives a YH Referral Form from a teacher with separate incidents recorded and strategies used by the class teacher.

(b)The Year Head meets with the student and imposes an appropriate intervention or sanction.

(c)The Year Head gives 24hrs notice to parents via the school journal when students are put on YH detention. (Received as part, or full sanction, due to two Stage 2 Referrals (YH) in one week).

(d) If a student does not present for detention yet presents at school then the Year Head refers the issue to the Deputy Principal/Principal who will sanction an after-school detention unless medically validated.

(f) If a student is in lunch time detention twice in a half term, they will automatically be put on White Report by the Year Head. Parents are informed by the Year Head prior to a student being placed on White Report.

### **YEAR HEAD WHITE REPORT**

If a student is in year head detention twice in a half term, they will automatically be put on White Report by the Year Head. The Year Head may also put a student on Year Head Report after receiving a Year Head

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2: Year Head Referral Form

Referral Form if they deem this a suitable intervention. Parents are informed by the Year Head prior to a student being placed on White Report.

- The Report period is usually lasting for five days.
- If the Report is deemed unsatisfactory by the Year Head at any stage during the Report period a request to meet parents will be made.
- Prior to a meeting with parents a Student Progress Report will be given to all of the student's teachers to fill in.

## **YEAR HEAD REFERRALS:**

(a) The Year Head receives a referral from a teacher. The Year Head meets the student. The class teacher may attend if requested. Following this interview, the Year Head may follow one or more of the following actions:

- Contact with the student's Parent/ Guardian.
- Arrange a meeting with the student's parent/guardian.
- Refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor/SST if deemed necessary after meeting with the student. Inform parents of this referral.
- Place the student on Year Head Report. The Year Head meets the student in the morning and evening.
- If a Year Head receives a Year Head Referral Form, he/she must complete the "Action by Year Head" section before a copy of the Referral Form goes into Student file and the Year Head keeps the second copy.
- A Year Head refer to the Deputy Principal after they have exhausted Year Head Interventions/ Sanctions, and/or if they deem the incident to be so serious that it warrants further sanction.

If the student's behaviour does not improve and /or if it considered by the Year Head that all interventions and/or sanctions to change the student's behaviour have not been successful it shall be moved to Stage 3 (YH completes a Deputy Principal Referral Form <sup>3</sup>).

### **Stage 3: Ladder of Referral: Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal may at any time impose any of the sanctions mentioned in the above Stages and may advise Year Head to impose certain sanctions and if consulted give direction in relation to procedures. One additional sanction the Deputy Principal may impose is the withdrawal from class for introspection and reflection for a brief period of time and the DP may instruct or consult with the YH on its implementation.

**NOTE: Teachers may never exclude a student from their classes and/or leave the student unsupervised. (Please use buddy system or send directly for YH/DP/P)**

A Year Head Referral Form may warrant a short withdrawal from class as stated above after the YH and DP consult on the matter whereby the DP will make the final decision. The DP may decide automatically without consultation with YH if situation is warranted.

The DP will normally include some of the interventions outlined below when dealing with situations.

- (a) Year Head passes all documentation relating to the student to the Deputy Principal. In most cases this is through the Deputy Principal Referral Form.
- (b) The Deputy Principal meets the student.
- (c) The Deputy Principal may consult with relevant teachers.
- (d) The Deputy Principal may refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor or a member of the Student Support whilst investigating the matter further.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 3: Year Head Referral Form

(e) The Deputy Principal may advise the Principal of the necessity for a disciplinary meeting of all parties if other bad behaviour occurs –This would include some of the following parties - the Class Teacher/Year Head/Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain, parents and other agencies including the EWO and/ or CAMHS or NEPS.

(f) The Deputy Principal after investigating the issue may impose a sanction.

(g) The Deputy Principal refers to the Principal if they deem it serious and may warrant suspension or further sanctions. The DP will use the Principal referral form<sup>4</sup>. This may include student's failure to attend detention.

(h) If a student is suspended (See stage 4) they return to school on Deputy Principal Yellow Card. The student will remain on the card until such a time as the DP is satisfied that the behaviour no longer needs to be monitored.

#### **Stage 4: Ladder of Referral: Principal**

The Principal has final responsibility for the day- to- day running of the school. He or she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate. The Principal is the last voice of reason regarding a fair process that begins in the classroom. All measures must be exhausted and deemed to be so by the Deputy Principal before a referral is brought to the Principal or if a single incident is considered by the Deputy Principal after being consulted by YH to be so serious that the Principal's attention is sought straight away. The DP only will determine if this is the route to take. It must be noted, however, that this will be a seldom occurrence and that all administrative aspects of the Code's implementation must still be expected to be followed through before the Principal makes a decision regarding the situation i.e. Stage 2 Year Head referral Form and contact with parents. (It is vital that Parents are informed especially in acts of a serious nature) Concerns about a student from a Child Protection perspective should be brought to the attention of the Principal as Designated Liaison Person immediately.

The Principal may:

- Apply any of the sanctions from STAGE 1-3
- Arrange Meeting with Parents / Guardians
- Referral to Student Support Team/Guidance for support.
- Meet with supporting agencies if relevant or necessary.
- Red Report Card
- Suspension ( Ref: Policy on Suspension)
- Recommend Re-integration plan in consultation with DP. This would usually consist of regular updates on how the student is reintegrating whilst on Deputy Principal Card Yellow Card or Principal's Red Card.
- Refer matter to the Board of Management.

#### **Stage 5: Ladder of Referral:**

Expulsion (See Expulsion Policy) Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that is only taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school has taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of the student however the School Authorities have tried a series of interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section29).

#### **Sanctions for Specific Breaches of Discipline**

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 4: Principal Referral Form

Specific Sanctions will be applied to specific breaches of the Code of Conduct as per the following chart:

<b>Breach</b>	<b>Sanction</b>
Class disruption	Verbal reprimand Note in Journal/VSWare Sanction as per ladder of referral
Repeated Class disruption	As above Break detention Lunchtime detention After school detention, further sanctions from the preceding list
Persistent Class Disruption	Referral as per Ladder of Referral, sanctions from the preceding list.
Smoking	3 stage response; see response to smoking
Mobile phones/Digital Devices	See separate section which follows
Late in morning	Sign in to Late Book in office-3 unexplained offences in one half term then after school detention
Late during day	Ladder of referral
Uniform	See separate section which follows
Mitching	See separate section which follows

### **Other Breaches**

Violent or threatening behaviour	Suspension. Further breaches of this rule may result in longer suspension or permanent exclusion. Portumna Community School is insistent that it is a safe learning and working environment for all.
Bullying	See Anti Bullying policy.
Malicious damage to property	Restitution of damage. Possible report to Gardai and possible suspension from school.
Stealing	Restitution of stolen items. Possible report to Gardai and possible suspension from school.
Verbal abuse	Apology, Contract of behaviour, Possible suspension. (See Ladder of Referral)

Refusal to obey instructions	A refusal to obey instructions is a refusal to accept the authority of the school to carry out its work and undermines the learning of the student and of others. After a formal warning is issued to the student about the gravity of the situation and the offer of a final opportunity to comply is ignored, it will be referred immediately to the Year Head or Deputy Principal for resolution. Suspension from school may be imposed by the Principal and parents / guardians will be asked to guarantee the future compliance of the student. (See Ladder of Referral)
Smoking/Vaping on school premises (forbidden by law) and on all school outings & events.	See Anti-Smoking/Vaping policy
Possession and/or use of illegal substances. Use of substances other than prescribed medications to affect consciousness and or behaviour.	Suspension. Possible permanent exclusion.
Possession and/or consumption of alcohol.	Suspension. Possible permanent exclusion.
Harassment of any sort (including but not limited to physical or sexual harassment)	These matters will be dealt with in keeping with the appropriate policies binding on community schools in the Republic of Ireland. Copies available from the Principal on request.

*The list is not exhaustive and the school reserves the right to impose sanctions for other violations which it considers appropriate.*

### ***RECORD KEEPING***

Records of student behaviour will be kept using VSWare, students' journals and Year Heads will keep paper copies of relevant details. The Deputy Principal and Principal will keep copies of all student details as they deem necessary.

### ***SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION***

The procedures to be used will be in keeping with the NEWB guidelines and the relevant legislation viz. The 1998 Education Act, the 2000 Education Welfare Act.

Suspension is a power devolved to the Principal of the school by the Board of Management. The Principal may suspend a student from school for up to three days. With the agreement of the Chairperson of the Board of Management a further two-day suspension may be imposed by the Principal. The Board may impose a longer suspension on the recommendation of the Principal in particular circumstances where there is a serious breach of standards or, in the Principal's judgement, there exists a health and safety risk to students and / or staff. This longer suspension may be imposed through consultation with the Chairperson of the Board pending a meeting of the Board.

All suspensions must be notified to the Board. All suspensions may be appealed to the Board by writing to the Principal but suspensions must be served pending the meeting of the Board to hear an appeal. Should an appeal be successful then the record of suspension will be expunged from the student's record.

A suspension will be imposed after an investigation by the Principal into the behaviour which may warrant a suspension. The principles of natural justice will be observed; the student will get a chance to put their side of the case, parents / guardians will be informed of the complaint, how it will be investigated and that suspension is a possible sanction and will get an opportunity to respond. In the case of an immediate suspension a preliminary investigation will be made by the Principal and parents / guardians will be notified. It may be necessary for a student to be collected from school by parents / guardians or a nominated responsible representative in the event of an immediate suspension on the grounds of safety. Once a decision to suspend is imposed, the Principal will write to the parents / guardians outlining the period of suspension and the reasons for it, commitments to be entered into and right of appeal. All suspensions must be served pending the hearing of any appeal.

Permanent exclusion (Expulsion) from school is the most serious sanction the school can impose and can only be done by the Board of Management upon the recommendation of the Principal. Expulsion will normally be a sanction of last resort although the Board may consider expulsion for a first offence which could include: a serious threat of violence against another, actual violence, supply of illegal drugs, sexual assault. The procedures to be followed regarding expulsion are:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal to expel
- Consideration by the Board of Management and the holding of a hearing which parents / guardians and student attend
- Board of Management deliberation and decision
- Notification to the Educational Welfare Officer of the decision to expel; a suspension may be imposed by the Board of Management for the days leading up to and including the day on which the expulsion becomes final.
- Consultations by the EWO
- 20 days after the day on which the EWO received notification of the decision to expel, the Board of Management confirms the decision to expel.
- The expulsion is then final.

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*SCHOOL UNIFORM (CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW SEPTEMBER 2020- MAY 2021)*

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**Rationale**

The rationale and guiding principle of the use of a uniform in Portumna Community School is one of equality for all our students. The uniform with its distinctive school crest makes real a characteristic spirit to which all students should aspire. Transmitting the school ethos is pivotal to our work in the school. It is important to realise that the uniform is not about stifling the individuality and the creativity of a student.

Round Neck Jumper	‘Lake Blue’ – Crested
Skirt or Trousers (Straight leg only)	In special ‘Mid Grey’
Uniform Shirt	In special Grey
Polo Shirt	
No coloured t shirts should be visible.	

Shoes	Dark only; no logos or brands visible
School Jacket	From September 2020 all students with the exception of 6 <sup>th</sup> years will be required to purchase the school jacket.

(Runners are not acceptable as footwear for class purposes; neither are light canvas type shoes with no heel or very slight heel; shoes should be practical and hard wearing; the school will determine if students' footwear is acceptable. You may seek advice in advance of purchasing shoes, even during August.)

Full uniform is to be worn in school prior to departure for outings and on return. Students will be informed in advance of the need for uniform to be worn on school outings.

#### P.E. gear

Students must have the requisite gear / equipment which should be clearly and indelibly marked. Safe and appropriate footwear is needed for all activities.

*N.B.: Students are expected to present in Full uniform on a daily basis. Sanctions will be imposed for failure to comply with this expectation. The assistance of Parents/Guardians in ensuring that students wear the proper uniform to school will be greatly appreciated.*

School Uniform available from: Duffy's Drapery, St. Brendan's Street, Portumna.  
Anthony Ryan, Shop Street, Galway.

#### **Breaches:**

Teachers may refer breaches of school uniform to the Year Head. If a student is out of uniform during the day the class teacher checks the journal; if signed by the Year Head regards the matter as being dealt with, if not then the student is referred to the Year Head at the end of class. The Year Head issues a warning to the student and may contact home. Repeat offences by the student will result in escalation in the referral system.

#### *THE JOURNAL*

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#### **Rationale**

The Journal is one of the key communication tools on the educational journey of you the student in Portumna Community School. A partnership is created between Parents, Students and Teachers on that journey and the journal records the steps in that partnership. As such the Journal is to be respected and students must have it in class during every class period, it must be accessible to the teacher on the student's desk and the student must present it at the request of any teacher.

- The journal must be used to record all homework assignments.
- The journal must be kept free of graffiti.
- Defaced journals will be confiscated and students will have to replace them with a new journal.
- Lost journals must be replaced; the replacement of a school journal is €10
- The journal should be signed each week by parents / guardians.
- If a journal is signed for a breach of the Code of Conduct, parents/guardians are expected to sign same to acknowledge they have read same.

### **Sanction:**

If a class teacher notices a defaced journal, the journal should be confiscated and given to the Year Head. The Year Head informs the student that the Journal must be replaced within three working school days. Further breaches to this procedure will result in escalation within the referral system.

### **ATTENDANCE (SEE SEPARATE ATTENDANCE STRATEGY)**

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All absences should be explained on the official notes section printed in the school journal. When students are absent in the morning then the school will send a text message to the parents / guardians. Parents / guardians have no need to reply unless they sent their daughter / son to school and are informed that they are absent. If the student is absent with the permission of parents / guardians in keeping with the acceptable absences listed below then parents / guardians should send the student to school with a note on the next day the student attends school. If the student was sent to school and parents / guardians receive a text message they should phone the school immediately and speak to the appropriate Year Head, or Deputy Principal or Principal.

Under the Educational Welfare Act 2000 we are required by law to report to the National Educational Welfare Board if we are concerned about a student's attendance and must notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a student has missed 20 days in the school year, even if those absences are accounted for by a note.

### **Absences which are acceptable to the school fall into two main categories:**

- (1) Illness/Certified Illness: Sufficient to require the student to remain at home and preventing the student from engaging in any activities outside the home.
- (2) Family emergencies, such as serious illness of family members, funerals or other crises. If absences for family reasons can be anticipated in advance notice should be given in the journal.

### **School policy on unacceptable absences:**

It is our policy that school attendance by students be considered in the same way as work attendance by adults. Days off for trips, shopping, wet weather, part-time work, or a variety of minor reasons are unacceptable.

We depend on your support in implementing our attendance policy. We will be happy to give you any help or advice we can if you are having problems with regard to school attendance.

Students who arrive late for school in the morning or afternoon must go to the office first to sign in- 3 unexplained lates in a half term will result in after school detention with the Deputy Principal or Principal.

Students leaving the school during the day for any reason must have signed out in the office with permission from their Year Head. Parents/Guardians must also sign the sign out book in the front office when collecting their son/daughter.

### **Mitching (leaving class or school without consent from appropriate school authority)**

“Mitching” is disruptive to school life and detrimental to the educational progress of the student.

Students found to be “mitching” will be reported to parents and an appropriate punishment will be imposed such as detention after school or lunchtime commensurate with the amount of time lost to mitching. Internal suspension may also be imposed. A standard letter will be sent out to inform parents that their son/daughter will go on a watch list, i.e. their attendance at each lesson will be monitored by class teacher, for the remainder of the year.

Offence 1 Parent and student meet with the Year Head.

Offence 2: The parent and student will meet the Deputy Principal and the Year Head.

Offence 3: Parents will meet the Principal and the student will be referred to the N.E.W.B. and the Board of Management will be briefed.

Detention/Internal suspension will be assigned as soon as is practically possible after each stage of the process.

## *HOMWORK*

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In Portumna Community School we are committed to ensuring that all students benefit fully from the education provided by regular homework. This helps to consolidate the work done in the classroom, enables students to work on their own initiative and fosters self-reliance.

### **Homework Procedures**

#### **Rationale:**

Homework is an integral part of the learning experience. It is given to reinforce the learning that has taken place in the classroom and to build on previous classwork. A range of homework is given and corrected on a regular basis. This includes written exercises, oral learning and project work. Subject teachers will give detailed homework requirements specific to their subject cognisant of Whole School Planning and Subject Department guidelines.

1. The class teacher checks written homework. This encourages students and helps determine progress.
2. Homework may be examined orally.
3. Teachers keep a record of completed written homework assignments.
4. Longer written exercises may be given at the weekend.
5. Good homework is acknowledged through VSWare or the School Journal.
6. If a student fails to produce a homework assignment this is communicated to the parents/ guardians through use of School Journal/recorded on VSware and for repeated offences may be referred to the Year Head as per the Ladder of Referral.
7. Tests may be used to check learning homework.
8. Homework is set by teachers before the end of each class. Students are given sufficient time to note the homework in their journals.
9. Students are expected to:
  - Record in their Journal at the end of each class all homework given – written and oral.
  - Revise the work covered in the class.
  - Present homework well – dated and written in their copies in a neat and clear fashion.
  - Present homework on time.

10. Homework should be undertaken in a quiet calm atmosphere, which will be similar to the circumstances under which the students will subsequently have to take examinations. It is also best undertaken in a carefully organised and tidy environment where the required material is readily to hand. Study is best done in blocks of time with a period of relaxation between sessions.

11. There are no precise rules for the amount of time students should spend on homework – it depends on the age of the student, the number of subjects to be studied and the level. The following general outline may be helpful:

First Year Two hours per night

Second Year Two hours per night

Third Year Three hours per night

Transition Year- A minimum of 1 hour per night

Senior Cycle A minimum of four hours per night

12. Parents/ Guardians can help their sons/daughters in the following ways:

- By providing a quiet comfortable environment for homework.
- By setting aside a regular time and place for homework.
- By establishing a routine in so far as it is possible.
- By checking that homework is being done.
- By checking the journal on a daily basis.

### *MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES*

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#### **Rationale:**

Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices capable of recording audio and / or pictures are not allowed in school as their use can constitute a serious disruption of school life and of class quality as well as posing risks of breach of privacy and enabling bullying behaviour. In addition, the un-moderated access to the internet from such devices renders them unsuitable to be brought into school.

Parents / Guardians should note that students may use the office telephone free of charge to make essential calls once permission to do so has been obtained.

Offence 1: The device is held for 24 hours in the Deputy Principal's Office.

Offence 2: The device is held for one week in the Principal's Office until the parent calls for it.

Offence 3: The device is held for the term in the Principal's Office until the parent calls for it.

Offence 4: The device is held for the duration of the school year and the student has to sign a commitment to uphold the code of conduct with the parent.

Students use of personal laptop computers or computers of any sort must receive the expressed permission of the Principal/Deputy Principal/SEN teacher before using such machines. Any such usage must comply with the school's Acceptable Use Policy for the internet. In the event of technological advances in the manufacture of electronic devices outstripping the rate of renewal of this code of conduct any and all determination of the acceptability of such electronic devices shall be made by the Principal pending the formal review process addressing the issue.

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 is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

### *SMOKING AND USE OF E-CIGARETTES*

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#### **Rationale:**

- Smoking and use of E-cigarettes in schools is banned under current legislation
- Education about the negative impacts on health of smoking is part of our SPHE programme at Junior Cycle.
- We are encouraging students to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Smoking / Vaping is incompatible with our status as a Health Promoting School

#### **Policy Content:**

- No member of the school community may smoke in the school buildings or grounds which includes the associated athletic track and the front of the school. This also includes e cigarettes
- Students who are smoking, or are in an area of the school grounds in the company of those who are smoking, or are smoking in school uniform, will be considered to have violated the policy.
- The policy also applies when students are engaged in extra-curricular activities, on school tours or other school-related activities.

#### **Sanctions for students:**

- All smoking materials / e cigarettes will be confiscated & Parents/Guardians will be informed by the Year Head.
- Detention will usually take place at lunchtime and if warranted between 1.15-2.15pm on Friday afternoons. Advance notice will be given to parents/guardians to arrange collection at 2.15pm.
- During detention, students will be given material to read and assignments to do, linked to the issue of smoking- related health risks and techniques for quitting smoking.
- Students will be provided with contact details/web addresses etc. for organisations that help smokers to quit.
- Repeated violation of the code may lead to further detentions and suspension. A student may also be refused permission to attend school trips or events.

#### **Roles and responsibilities:**

- All members of the school community will abide by the policy.
- Parents are expected to support the policy.
- Staff and management will enforce the policy.

### *HEALTH & SAFETY:*

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Health & Safety regulations are implemented under the terms of the applicable legislation. All students are expected to act in a way which makes a priority of the health and safety of everyone. Please see the Health and Safety policy statement available from the Principal on request.

### *PROPERTY:*

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Students must respect their own property, that of others and of the school.

Every student should ensure that his/her property is indelibly marked and no student should leave money unattended.

Students lockers are available for a small rental fee. Students buy their own locks in all year groups except first year where the school supplies them. All lockers must have a lock on them and any lock for which there is no key will be cut off. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the locker is kept secure with a good quality padlock. An extra charge shall be imposed should a student lose a key.

Students are responsible for their own property.

Coats and school bags must not be left overnight on the school premises unless placed in a student locker.

Bicycles must be parked in the designated area.

Students must not bring cars or motorcycles onto the school grounds unless special permission has been sought from and granted by the School Principal.

The student must look after the books rented from the school book rental scheme and ensure that they are maintained in good order;

- Should a book be lost or damaged, the price of that book must be paid to the school
- If the cost of lost/damaged books is not made up by parents/guardians by the end of the school year, the school may refuse membership of the Scheme for the following school year.

### *ANTI-BULLYING CODE:*

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- Every person has the right to enjoy his/her life and leisure free from bullying.
- Every person in Portumna Community School has the right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure free from bullying in the school.
- Any repeated unkind actions, comments, remarks, teasing, ridicule, oppression or harassment whether done in person or by means of electronic device will be called bullying.
- Our school community will not tolerate any such actions even if these were not intended to hurt.
- Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying which will be dealt with seriously. They may report to any member of staff including teachers, Year Heads, the Chaplain, the Guidance Counsellor, the Deputy Principal and the Principal.

- Portumna Community School is a ‘reporting’ school – bullying is too serious and important not to report.
- Students will be given opportunity to inform the school authorities of any student whom they believe to be a victim of bullying. This may be done by means of morning note, a signed note at an anti-bullying assembly where students are invited to name others who may be suffering bullying by talking to a member of staff.

COVID 19 Addendum to Revised Code of Conduct

In line with DES and HSE guidelines and the Portumna Community School ‘COVID 19 Response Plan’ students who are in breach of protocols outlined during student induction may be given a ‘Clear Covid Instruction’ to adhere to DES and HSE guidelines.

Any clear or intentionally breach of protocols in relation to interference or malicious intent to damage /remove PPE equipment, breaching social distancing/decreasing social interaction guidelines, threatening COVID 19 related behaviour, intentional spitting, use of chewing gum, interference or malicious intent to damage /remove sanitising equipment or signage will result in students being automatically referred to the Principal and removal from school grounds under parental/guardianship supervision for a time as indicated by the Principal.

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Students can receive a maximum of two subsequent ‘Clear COVID 19 Instructions’ before referral to the Principal.

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This Code of Conduct will be reviewed from time to time.