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## **Code of Behaviour**

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### **Mission Statement**

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Moville Community College is a school where everybody is encouraged and expected to be the best that they can be.

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### **Vision**

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Moville Community College is a second level school under the management of Donegal Education and Training Board. We provide a broad curriculum and a high quality education to learners in our community. We promote academic success and always recognise our students' achievements. Our staff, supported by parents, enable the students to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become responsible young adults who contribute positively to society. We value mutual respect, tolerance and positive relationships. We celebrate diversity and we seek to foster a sense of belonging. We include all students in our school and we aim to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

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### **Introduction**

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Under Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board.

Our Code of Behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others and for our environment, so that a positive and cooperative atmosphere prevails. The Code of Behaviour has been developed by drawing on the content of the existing behavioural framework for Moville Community College and has sought to draw together the relevant aspects which exist currently as self-contained policies and protocols. Staff, pupils and parents of the school have been involved in this process.

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### **Context**

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Moville Community College is a co-educational second level school under the management of Co. Donegal Education and Training Board. It draws its students primarily from East Inishowen. The college participates in the DEIS programme aimed at tackling disadvantage.



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## **The Code of Behaviour**

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The Code of Behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well. The Code of Behaviour assists the school community to promote positive relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The Code of Behaviour assists teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school with a focus on positive mental health.

The Code of Behaviour enables school authorities to strike an appropriate balance between our duty to maintain an effective learning environment for all and our responsibility to students whose behaviour presents a challenge to the teaching and learning process. The Code of Behaviour is a key tool in enabling the school authorities to support the learning of every student in the school. Maintaining a harmonious environment can present a challenge to schools, given competing needs, time pressures and varying capacities or readiness to learn. A Code of Behaviour that has the support of the school community can go a long way to helping schools to meet this challenge successfully.

Menville Community College is committed to the holistic development of each student. We expect, encourage and support students to participate fully in all activities which constitute the life of the school. This is evident through participation in school organised & supported events, both academic and non-academic, such as educational outings, competitions, sporting activities, career guidance opportunities, music, drama, art, work experience, charity work, fundraising and health/mental health promoting activities.

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## **Rationale**

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Many people work together in our school each day and therefore a high level of courtesy and consideration for others is necessary. Behaviour which is ill-mannered, disrespectful, dangerous, vexatious or disruptive cannot be allowed. Our code is one that is based on the recognition of the student as an individual and yet creates an environment in which the welfare of all is protected.

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## **Aims**

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The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

- To create a safe, secure teaching and learning environment for all by promoting a sense of mutual respect amongst all members of our school community.
- To ensure that effective procedures are in place which will allow for the day-to-day running of the school whilst complying with all relevant legislation as well as Department of Education and Skills requirements.
- To facilitate the active involvement of all school personnel.



- To ensure understanding by the parents, students, staff and management of Menville Community College of the Code of Behaviour, the reasons for it, as well as each person's responsibilities in relation to its implementation.
- To emphasise the promotion and acknowledgement of positive behaviour.
- To outline the strategies to be used to prevent poor behaviour and the ways in which positive behaviour is acknowledged and supported.
- To outline the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions that will be used in response to negative behaviour.
- To outline the interventions to be used when a student repeatedly misbehaves or seriously misbehaves.

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### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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Each member of our school community has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour and a role in dealing with and minimising negative behaviour. It is expected that each member of our community will be respectful and courteous in dealings with others.

There are two fundamental principles which underpin our Code of Behaviour:

1. Respect for self.
2. Respect for others.

Respecting others involves recognising their rights including the right of each member of the class to learn and the right of the teacher to do his/her work.

#### **Students**

Our school expects that students will behave well and do their utmost to uphold the Code of Behaviour of our school.

Every student has a RESPONSIBILITY to:

Do their best within their abilities: to co-operate in class, to listen attentively and to complete required homework.

Comply with school rules, which are in place for the benefit of all.

#### **Parents**

Our school acknowledges the pivotal role of parents and guardians in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour. It is an expectation that all parents and guardians support the Code of Behaviour and actively encourage their sons and daughters to uphold it.

#### **Staff**

Our school acknowledges the contribution of all staff in the day-to-day running of the school. Each member of staff has a part to play in the successful operation of our



Code of Behaviour. In particular, staff have a responsibility to respond to and report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour, which they witness.

### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management is the decision-making body of Moville Community College. The school acknowledges its role in the development and operation of our Code of Behaviour. While members of the Board of Management are not involved in day-to-day procedures, they are the body to whom parents may appeal in cases of suspension or expulsion.

### **Ways in which THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR is supported**

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Students are encouraged to understand, adhere to and uphold the Code of Behaviour in numerous ways including the following:

- Positive relationships amongst and between students and staff as well as between school and home are prioritised. Where conflict occurs a restorative resolution is sought.
- The Code of Behaviour is available on the school website and available in printed format through the school office.
- The Code is introduced early in first year and is constantly reinforced by all staff and in particular by class tutors, year co-ordinators and staff members.
- At the beginning of each school year, all students are formally re-introduced to the Code of Behaviour. This is repeated periodically at morning assembly, during timetabled tutor time and throughout the school year.
- The caring approach of the school is evident in the provision and support of supplementary activities such as the Breakfast Club, Homework Club, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, student mentoring programme, Learning Support, Pastoral Care etc. all which endeavour to foster a sense of belonging and encourage positive behaviour from students.
- Consistent use of the school diary as a means of communicating between home and school. Students and parents/guardians are requested to sign the diary upon receipt of a new diary. Parents/guardians are asked to check the diary on regular basis.
- Various media such as our website, texting service, E-mail, Parents' Newsletter, annual school magazine, local media as well as personal contact are used to enhance communication with students and home.
- The broad and varied curriculum on offer in Moville Community College offers substantial choice and seeks to accommodate students' abilities and preferences.
- Structures are in place to enhance and encourage positive behaviour including class tutors, year co-ordinators, student mentor programme,



guidance counsellor, the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator, the Care Team etc.

- Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Sexism, Peer Pressure, Harassment, Responsible Internet Use, Substance misuse, Sexual Health etc. are dealt with through SPHE and other subjects, visiting speakers, etc.
- Positive Contributions to the school are encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded in numerous ways such as school representation and pupil leadership - the Mentor System, Student Council, display of student work, verbal and written affirmation, participation in internal and external competitions, school reference and so on.
- Adult supervision at break-times assists in detecting, sanctioning and reducing inappropriate behaviour.
- Moville Community College promotes principles of Restorative Practice (RP) through the operation of a junior and senior RP facilitator. These members of staff address issues with both junior and senior students and are regularly involved in weekly student support meetings.

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### **Rewards & Incentives**

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The following are some examples of rewards and positive reinforcements employed in Moville Community College.

- Acknowledgement in formal reports sent home in December, March and June.
- Appointment to leadership role – Student Council Member, Student mentor.
- Commendation at Assembly
- Commendation in reference
- Display of student work
- Entry in student diary
- Opportunity to access quality teaching and learning experiences
- Participation in various activities
- Positive note home to parents/guardians
- Positive recognition by Deputy Principal/Principal
- Positive recognition by staff - subject teacher, tutor, year co-ordinator, etc.

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### **Strategies & Sanctions**

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While every effort is made to address issues of behaviour in a positive and restorative manner, it is important for the overall effectiveness of the school that there are clear consequences to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.

Students may meet with the junior/senior Restorative Practice facilitators as a means of resolving issues at an early stage where possible. This may involve meeting with parents/guardians with/without the students.



Sanctions are designed to minimise the disruption to teaching and learning. Moreover, the emphasis is on remediation rather than being strictly punitive. Sanctions may include the following:

- Verbal reprimands from teacher/staff member.
- Teacher entry in student diary.
- Extra subject work.
- School community tasks.
- Student placed 'On Report'.
- Loss of privileges.
- Formal detention.
- Referral to appropriate personnel including tutor, care team member, guidance counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal.
- Communication may be initiated with home. A decision may be made that a formal meeting be convened.
- A contract of Behaviour may be introduced.
- A Behaviour Plan may be introduced.
- In-house (internal) suspension.
- Students may be excluded from activities organised by the school.
- A case may be referred to the Board of Management.
- Fine/repaying costs.
- Suspension (external). In instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated low level disruptive behaviour a student may be suspended in accordance with the College Policy on Suspension. (See below).
- Expulsion. In instances of recurring serious misbehaviour or an incident of gross misbehaviour, a student may be expelled in accordance with the College Policy on Expulsion. (See below).
- The Principal and the Board of Management reserve the right to have the final say in all matters relating to Discipline.

### **Merville Community College Rules**

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*Every student:*

1. Has the right to attend school to pursue his/her education free from interference, bullying or intimidation.
2. Must co-operate with and respect in every way the teachers and other members of staff.
3. Must act in a way that will not damage or destroy school or others' property.
4. Must attend school on a regular basis and have a written explanation for any enforced absence.
5. Must be on time for school and class.
6. Must be fully prepared with books, copies pens and any specialised equipment for every class.
7. Must wear the full school uniform when in school, going to/from school and representing the school.



8. Must conform to the general ethos in manners and dress as decided by the Principal, Staff Parents and Students.
9. Must be in possession of a school Diary at all times and produce it when requested by teachers and/or parents.
10. Must contribute positively to school at all times and in particular through involvement in extra-curricular activities of interest.

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### **Substance Misuse**

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Use of, being in possession of or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is prohibited in school buildings, on school grounds, in the vicinity of the school or on a school related activity.

Where a student contravenes this rule the matter should be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal or a person designated by them.

- a. The Principal, Deputy Principal or person designated by them, should investigate the incident.
- b. The parents of those involved will be informed.
- c. Where appropriate the Juvenile Liaison Officer will be informed.
- d. Depending on the seriousness of the case the Principal, under his duty of care, may suspend one or all of those involved and/or recommend that the Board of Management expel a student from the College.
- e. Where substance misuse has occurred the Principal may require that the student(s) attend counselling.
- f. Where the incident occurs on a school trip the organising teachers may arrange for the student to be transported home. The student's parents/guardians will be liable for any expense incurred.

### **Smoking (including e cigarettes).**

Smoking is prohibited in school buildings, on school grounds, in the vicinity of the school or on a school related activity.

Where a student contravenes this rule the matter should be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal or a person designated by them.

- a. The Principal, Deputy Principal or person designated by them, should investigate the incident.
- b. The parents of those involved will be informed.
- c. The pupil may be suspended from school.
- d. Second and subsequent incidents will result in suspension from school and/or fine.

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### **Attendance**

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Regular, punctual attendance is crucial for effective progress and for academic achievement in school. Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 there is a statutory obligation to attend school and the Principal is legally required to inform the National Educational Welfare Board when absences of more than 20 days in a school year occur.

Absences must be explained by a signed note from parents/guardians. Parents are requested to inform the Principal if a pupil is going to be absent for a prolonged period. Under the Education Welfare Act non-attendance at school may lead to prosecution. Parents will be notified if a student's attendance is causing concern.

Pupils who become ill during the day should report to the Main Office. Where necessary, contact will then be made by a staff member with a parent or guardian by telephone.

A student may never leave the college without firstly Signing Out. Students may Sign Out on production of a written explanation, signed by a parent and countersigned by the student's tutor.

There are Health and Safety implications where pupils absent themselves from school or class without permission. Because of this, the school views all such absences as serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

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### **Participation in Class and Studies**

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To ensure fairness and also to enhance the effectiveness of classes it is important that all pupils are aware of some key responsibilities in this regard.

- Students must be punctual and have all the necessary books and materials for every class. If books are lost or damaged they must be replaced. All books and equipment must be maintained in good condition and free of all unnecessary markings. Homework should be done conscientiously and tidily.
- Eating/drinking during class is not allowed.
- Prohibited Goods: Students may not use chewing gum.
- Relationships with others: It is essential that students show respect for every person – staff, fellow students and visitors – both within and outside the school. The respect is shown through actions, attitudes, behaviour and language.

*Every student is expected:*

- (i) To treat other people (fellow pupils, teachers, non-teaching members of staff, visitors to the school with dignity and respect at all times.





- (ii) To greet teachers and other staff on corridors and on entering their classroom.
- (iii) To walk, not run on corridors and stairs.
- (iv) To board school buses in an orderly manner and to avoid loud and rough behaviour while travelling to and from school. Students are expected to wear seat belts provided at all times.
- (v) Never to use abusive or threatening language in verbal or written communications or in the use of IT or personal electronic devices.
- (vi) Never to interfere with the property or belongings of others. Theft will be viewed as a serious breach of the Code of Discipline and may necessitate contact with the Gardaí.
- (vii) Fighting/physical aggression or any form of threatening behaviour is viewed as extremely serious and is subject to immediate sanctions including suspension.
- (viii) Not to engage in, or be complicit in, any form of bullying.

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### **School Diary**

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Every pupil is required to have a School Diary. It is the primary method of communication between home and school. Parents are encouraged to regularly examine their son's/daughter's diary. Each pupil is required to have their diary at all times during the school day. Diaries should be on desk for every class. School diaries must be kept neat and free from graffiti. A student may have to replace her journal at additional cost if it is lost, deemed unsightly or contains inappropriate/offensive material.

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### **School Property**

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Students are expected to respect school property. The cost of repairs/replacement of any damage will have to be paid by the student concerned or his/her parents. This includes textbooks covered under the Book Rental Scheme and lockers.

All books rented to students will be continually monitored. All books remain the property of the college and students will be required to pay for any loss or damage. Students will be required to return books when instructed by teachers or at the conclusion of their final state examination in that particular subject. Students are reminded to look after all their equipment carefully. Do not bring valuable items to school. School uniform and personal possessions should be clearly labelled. The school cannot accept responsibility for students' property/possessions.

Lockers are available for student use and assist students in being organised throughout the school day. Lockers should be kept clean, free of graffiti and used only for the purpose of holding school materials. The school authorities reserve the right to inspect any or all lockers at its discretion.



### **Travelling to/from Merville Community College**

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When travelling to or from school at any time during the school day it is imperative that students show due consideration for people and property in the surrounding community.

Students who travel to or from school by bus are expected to always behave in a courteous and respectful manner. All students are expected to wear a seatbelt when travelling on school transport. Students are reminded that their behaviour to and from school is in the public view. Appropriate behaviour is expected from students in this regard. Fighting or any form of threatening behaviour is viewed as extremely serious and is subject to immediate sanctions including suspension.

### **Personal Electronic Devices (PED) (Including Mobile Phones)**

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It is accepted that PEDs are widely used by students and may be brought onto the College campus. This is permissible, but it is understood that all students must use PEDs in a responsible and mature manner. Due to advances in technology, PEDs have become a major factor in school bullying cases. We aim to develop a safer and more secure teaching and learning environment for all.

PEDs must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others. This principle applies to (but is not limited to) telephone calling, voice mailing, texting or recording, or sending of, images. The use of PEDs are strictly prohibited in toilets and where students are changing for PE or school games.

Photographs may not be taken without the prior consent of the person who is being photographed. The sending of unwelcome texts or images, and the making of unwelcome calls to others is regarded as a serious offence. Students who, in the opinion of the College, engage in such behaviour may be banned from using a PED or bringing one to school.

Use of PEDs to download, store, record or transmit unacceptable images, video, sound, texts or other files is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. The College reserves the right to request a student to submit his/her PED for inspection if, in the opinion of the College, a student is suspected of inappropriate use.

PEDs brought to school are entirely at the owner's risk and the College will not accept any responsibility for loss or damage. The college accepts the right of the student to have a PED while in the college, while also advising parents that the school office telephone is available to use in emergency, making it unnecessary for students to have a mobile phone with them.



The use of PEDs is restricted to break times and to the periods before and after the school day. Students may use a PED during lessons if and only when instructed to so by the teacher. It is not permitted to use or hold a PED during or between classes. In the event of a student contravening the above the following sanctions apply:

*Sanctions*

1. A note will be put in the diary of the student.
2. The PED (including SIM card) will be put in an envelope with: Student's name, teacher's name and date the phone was confiscated. The phone will be stored in the College office.
3. If the phone is taken on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday the PED may be collected by the parent/ guardian of the student on the following Friday.
4. If taken on a Thursday or Friday, the PED may be collected by the parent/ guardian of the student on the following Monday.
5. The Principal and/or Deputy Principal may exercise discretion to return the PED to the student before the required time has elapsed in certain circumstances.

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### **Uniform**

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The school uniform originated as a recommendation from the inaugural Parents Association. The uniform instills a sense of belonging to the school. The school uniform may be the most economical way for parents to dress their children for school.

All students are required to wear the prescribed school uniform.

The uniform is:

- A bottle green jumper with a crest affixed
- Black trousers or knee length black skirt. Trousers must be straight leg and touch the shoe
- Shirt - sage green or plain white
- School tie
- School coat with crest
- Black shoes
- Black socks/tights

Physical Education.

- Full PE uniform is required during PE classes.

Jewellery.

- Jewellery may not be worn if, in the opinion of the principal or subject teacher, it is a health and safety risk.



#### Presentation of the uniform.

- Ties should be knotted and visible.
- Shirts tucked in at all times.
- If a necklace is worn it should be under the shirt.
- Scarves are not to be worn during class.
- Students must change back into uniform after PE and extra-curricular activities.

#### Roles & Responsibility

The wearing of the correct school uniform by each student is the responsibility of his or her parent/guardian. The uniform will be monitored by all staff on a daily basis, particularly by the tutor at assembly and the subject teacher in periods 4 and 7 after breaks. All personal belongings, uniforms etc. should be clearly marked with the owner's name as no responsibility can be taken by the school for the loss of belongings or money.

#### Sanctions

Pupils may be excluded from class if not wearing the full school uniform.

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### **Bullying**

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Bullying is dealt with as a separate policy. The sanctions listed above (up to and including suspension and expulsion) may apply to bullying.

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### **Students Driving To/From School**

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Students may use their own or a family vehicle to drive to and from school subject to the following:

- The parents of the student must apply in writing to the Principal requesting permission for their son or daughter to drive to and from school.
- The student must be in possession of a full driving licence and must be insured to drive the vehicle. Documentary evidence of these must be provided to the Principal with application.
- The student will be allocated a parking space or location to park the vehicle.
- The vehicle may not be accessed between 8.55am and the end of the school day, with the exception of when the student is signing out of school.
- Other students may not be carried as passengers without the written permission of their parents.



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## Suspension

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Suspension is one of the possible sanctions available to address serious misbehaviour. It is defined as:

*Requiring the student to be absent from school for a specified, limited period of school days.*

The Board of Management of Merville Community College has the authority to suspend a student and this authority is delegated to the Principal for periods up to and including three (3) days. In exceptional circumstances the Principal has been authorised to suspend a student for up to and including five (5) days – this is to allow for a meeting of the Board of Management to be convened. If the Principal deems it necessary to exercise this authority it should happen in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- The student's behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Additionally, in Merville Community College the following behaviours may lead to suspension:

- Disrespectful language towards a member of staff.
- A threat of violence towards any member of the school community.
- Actual violence towards any member of the school community.
- Sexual harassment and/or intimidation of any member of the school community.
- Fighting.
- Contravening the rules regarding alcohol/drugs (see above).
- Bullying

### Procedure

Where a situation or complaint arises that may lead to a suspension the following procedures will apply:

- The Principal, Deputy Principal or person designated by them, should investigate the situation or complaint.
- The student(s) involved and their parents will be informed and given an opportunity to respond.
- If the decision is taken to issue a suspension this will be communicated to the student and his/her parents. The parents will be informed of their right to appeal to the Board of Management. Appeals should be sent in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Management stating the grounds for appeal.



The school reserves the right to issue an immediate suspension where, in the opinion of the Principal, it is necessary for the safe running of the school. In such circumstances the parents will be contacted to make arrangements to collect the student.

### **Expulsion**

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Expulsion is one of the possible sanctions available to address serious misbehaviour.

Donegal ETB has the authority to expel a student and this authority is delegated to the Board of Management.

The decision to expel a student requires serious grounds such as:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of disruption to the learning of others and/or to the teaching process.
- The student's presence in the school constitutes a significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for expulsion.

Additionally, in Moville Community College the following behaviours may lead to expulsion:

- Persistent use of disrespectful language towards members of staff.
- A threat of violence towards any member of the school community.
- Actual violence towards any member of the school community.
- Sexual harassment and/or intimidation of any member of the school community.
- Fighting.
- Contravening the rules regarding alcohol/drugs (see above).
- Bullying

### **Procedure**

Where a situation or complaint arises that may lead to an expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- The Principal, Deputy Principal or person designated by them, should investigate the situation or complaint.
- The student(s) involved and their parents will be informed and given an opportunity to respond.
- If the decision is taken to recommend expulsion to the Board of Management this will be communicated to the student and his/her parents. The parents will be informed of their right to make a submission to the Board of Management and their right to appeal, in the first instance, to Co. Donegal ETB.
- If the Board of Management decides to expel a student the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.



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### Reviewing the Code of Behaviour

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*The Code of Behaviour is formally reviewed every year.*