Breifne College
Co. Cavan

Breifne College Code of Behaviour 2026/27

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INTRODUCTION

This Code of Behaviour was developed in 2026, by Breifne College, in accordance with the guidelines Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, published by the National Educational Welfare Board, 2008, and in consultation with the members of the Board of Management, staff, the students, the parents' committee and the wider school community. The Code of Behaviour conforms with legislation, as required by Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000). The Code of Behaviour will be available on the school website.

This Code is to be read in conjunction with the CMETB Suspensions and Expulsions Policy (Appendix1)

Scope of Policy: This Code applies to students of Breifne College, Cavan, and relates to all school activities, both during and outside of normal school hours. This policy has been reviewed in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students. This policy is in line with National Educational Welfare guidelines.

This policy may also relate to an act which took place, or allegedly took place, outside the College, where such act, or alleged act, gives rise to a serious concern on the part of school management in relation to the health and safety of the students and staff of the school, and to the school's reputation.

This Code of Behaviour applies to all students of the College, including those who are over 18 years of age. Acceptance of and adherence to the Code is a condition of enrolment which persists throughout the student's time at school regardless of their age.

Relationship to School's Mission, Vision, and Aims:

This policy has been developed in line with the mission of our school, which has at its core, "**the student is at the heart at everything we do**". The school strives to provide a safe secure learning environment for the development of our students. Our school Code of Behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others, and for our environment, so that a positive and cooperative school atmosphere prevails.

Rationale:

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 disruptive to quality teaching, and learning, cannot be tolerated.

Goals/Objectives:

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

- To create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create a positive and safe environment for quality teaching and learning
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff, parents, and visitors
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- To have effective procedures in place which will allow for the day to day running of the school, and which meet the demands of current legislation
- To help students mature into responsible and participating citizens
- To allow for the appropriate involvement of all members of the school community
- To ensure understanding by the parents, students, staff, and management of the Code of Behaviour, and the reasons for it
- To outline the strategies to be used to prevent poor behaviour, and the ways in which positive behaviour is acknowledged
- 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

Policies linked to the Code of Behaviour:

- Bí Cinealta, Anti-bullying Policy
- ETHOS
- Behaviours of Concern
- Assessment Policy
- In School Suspension Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Admission Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Care Team and Procedures
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Extra-Curricular Policy
- Homework Policy
- Safety Health and Welfare Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Roles and Responsibilities:

A positive school climate and atmosphere is created through the shared actions, relationships and behaviour of everyone in the school community. Our school acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has responsibility for the promotion of good behaviour, and a role in strengthening positive relationships of respect and trust. The school expects that students will always do their best to uphold the Code of Behaviour of our school.

The school will support all members of the community in understanding and fulfilling these responsibilities. Its ethos, policies, teaching practices, classroom management, pastoral supports and day-to-day procedures will work together to promote positive behaviour, effective teaching and learning, inclusion, safety, respect and wellbeing.

Parents/Guardians:

The school acknowledges the role of parents/guardians in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour and expects them to support the values, standards and expectations of the Code, and to encourage their sons/daughters to uphold it.

The school will provide parents/guardians with appropriate opportunities to understand the Code, contribute to its review and learn how their partnership with the school can support behaviour and learning.

Teachers:

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is a powerful influence on behaviour in the school. The Code seeks to foster relationships based on trust, respect and fairness. The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour. The school recognises that effective teaching, an inclusive and engaging curriculum, and consistent classroom management provide the foundation for positive learning behaviour. Teachers work collaboratively to establish clear expectations and consistent boundaries, promote positive behaviour and respond appropriately when difficulties arise. Subject Teachers, Class Tutors, Year Heads, N.B.S.S. Personnel, Guidance Counsellors, Learning Support Teachers, Psychological Services, Other Agencies, Pastoral Care Team, Deputy Principals, the Principal, and relevant support personnel and agencies each have specific responsibilities within the school's whole-school approach to supporting behaviour, teaching and learning.

Other Staff:

The school acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff (SNAs, Secretaries, Caretakers, Cleaners, etc.) in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful operation of our Code of Behaviour. They have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour, and examples of positive behaviour,

that they witness, model respectful and responsible behaviour and support the school's agreed standards and practices.

Board of Management:

All policies are developed with the authority of the Board of Management, and must be approved by its members, and formally approved and confirmed by Cavan and Monaghan Education Training Board, before becoming official school policy. While members of the Board of Management are not involved in the day-to-day procedures, they are the body to whom parents and students (over 18) may appeal in cases of suspension or expulsion. The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students. Parents/Guardians are expected to model the standards that the students are asked to respect. The way in which parents and teachers interact helps provide students with a model of good working relationships.

SCHOOL RULES

School Rules apply *whenever you are wearing the school uniform; whenever you are representing the school; or whenever you are engaged in any school activity*. If a behaviour which occurs outside normal school time impacts negatively on school life for any of its members, or brings the reputation of the school into disrepute, School Rules, and sanctions may apply. School Rules describe in simple terms how to behave in order to learn well, and to develop into mature and responsible adults. They are there to safeguard the students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach in a caring, safe, and respectful environment. Therefore...

We Expect:

1. That you come to school every day and arrive on time
2. That you come to school in full uniform, clean, and tidy
3. That you have respect for people and property in the school; while taking part in extracurricular activities; or while representing the school
4. That you do your best in class and at your homework
5. That you come in properly prepared for your subjects
6. That you act in a respectful manner around the school and travelling to and from the school

School Rules Explained:

1. **That you come to school every day and arrive on time.**

This means:

- That you are in class by 8.48am daily
- That you attend school every day, unless it is unavoidable

- If you are found mitching a lesson, you will automatically be placed on Suspension in the first instance. This may increase if repeated.
- That if you miss school, your parent/guardian adds a note of explanation to the Tyro app on your return to school
- That if you are unavoidably late, your parent/ guardian adds a note of explanation on the Tyro app
- That if you are sick during the school day and need to leave the school, you approach the attendance officer (and in their absence your Year Head), who will then phone home for you. A parent (or authorised adult) must collect you from the school office, and you must sign out using the Tyro app
- That if you must leave school during the day for a pre-arranged appointment you must approach your Year Head in the morning for them to approve said appointment on the Tyro app prior to signing out at the office
- That you proceed to all classes without delay and arrive on time
- That you do not go to the toilets/lockers between or during classes without permission
- That you behave yourself on your way to and from school; between classes; and at breaktimes
- That you enter the school through the designated doors
  That you behave on the school buses

Because:

- Supervision does not start until 8.30am and stops at 4.00pm
- Time missed is hard to make up
- The school is entitled to an explanation for your absence/lateness
- Arriving late for class wastes your time, the teacher's time and class time valuable teaching & learning time
- All toilet breaks will be noted on Tyro
- Going to the toilets/lockers during or between class disrupts learning
- No gangs or groups allowed in toilets/cubicles
- The school rules apply on your way to and from school

Attendance and Punctuality:

Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the daily timetable, and to co-operate with its implementation. The efficiency of Breifne College as a learning environment is largely dependent on attendance and punctuality. The College therefore expects the following of each student:

- A record of attendance is carried out each morning, and by subject teachers for each class
- Any student who has been absent from school must have a note on the Tyro app, explaining the reason for his/her absence, which must be signed by a parent/guardian. If no note is received the absence will be recorded as 'unexplained' on attendance returns
- If a student is absent for a total of 20 days from school, TUSLA Child & Family Agency will be automatically notified by the attendance office, or Home School Liaison Officer
- Dental and medical appointments should be made outside of school time where possible
- The school cannot approve of students being withdrawn from school for holidays, or non-medical reasons during the school year
- The safety and welfare of our students is our primary concern. Breifne College considers unauthorised absence from school as a breach of school discipline. Parents/Guardians will be notified, and sanctions will be applied
- Rewards are issued for students with perfect attendance each term, and each year

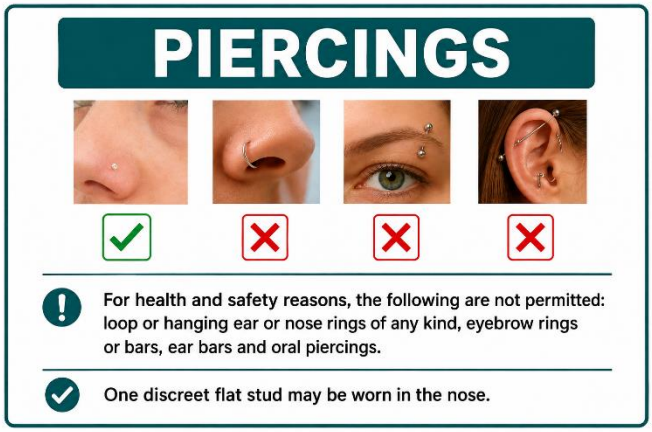
2. **That you come to school in full uniform, clean, and tidy**.

This means:

Note: The school uniform consists of a blue jumper with school crest; Navy trousers as decided by the school authority; blue shirt for boys and striped blouse for girls; only white round neck T-shirts are too be visible under the school shirt; low heeled black soft with black soled shoes (no logos on shoes); and school jacket or fleece. No non-uniform hoodies or jackets are permitted on the school's premises. There is a school fleece available as part of the uniform. However, this is an optional extra and not to be worn instead of the school jumper. The school jumper is mandatory; the fleece is not. Where a student has sensory, additional educational or other identified needs that affect their ability to wear the prescribed uniform, reasonable adjustments or exceptions may be agreed with the school following consultation with the student and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may be asked to provide relevant supporting documentation from an appropriate professional, where reasonably necessary, to help the school understand the student's needs and determine a suitable adjustment.

The decision of the Principal/Deputy Principals will be final in the interpretation of the rules in relation to uniform and appearance.

- You always wear the full school uniform in school, except when otherwise directed by the school
- You are required to bring and to wear the school's P.E. uniform for participation in timetabled P.E. classes, sports training, and sports competitions (You can only wear the Breifne College P.E. uniform to school if you have P.E. period one)
- You should have a neat, tidy and natural looking hairstyle. Hair stencils, tattoos, designs/patterns etc. cut or shaved into the hair, are not permitted.
- Hats and scarves are to remain in your school bag for the duration of the school day. Coats, jackets, and sweatshirts are not permitted in class, and should be left in the locker. Exemptions to this rule exist for head gear worn for religious/cultural purposes.
- **Smoking and Vaping is forbidden anytime** you are wearing the school uniform; when you are representing the school; or when you are engaged in any school activity
- Jewellery is limited to two finger rings; one discrete studded earring in the lower lobe of each ear; and a wristwatch. **One discrete flat stud in the nose is permitted.**



- **Visible tattoos are not permitted.**
- **Fingernails are to be kept short and must not interfere with teaching, and learning, or safety.**
- Excessive make-up is not allowed
- **Non-uniform items may be confiscated for collection by a parent/guardian at a suitable time or stored in an area until after school .**

Because:

- You should wear your uniform with pride; be dressed suitably for school activities; and be a good ambassador when representing the school
- Hair style/colour should be in keeping with a dress code suitable for school
- Hats and scarves can be a distraction and a danger in class
- Smoking is unhealthy. Students should always be good ambassadors for their school
- Facial piercings can be dangerous
- Wearing excessive jewellery can be dangerous in the context of health and safety
- Make up can cause discolouration of school uniform, and can be damaging to certain skin conditions

3. <u>That you have respect for people and property in the school; while taking part in extracurricular activities; or while representing the school.</u>

This means:

- Being helpful, and treating other students, all staff, and visitors to the school, with good manners and respect
- Respecting the instructions of your teachers and staff
- Any form of bullying is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- That you should proceed in an orderly fashion by walking on the right-hand side of the corridors and across the school yard.
- That you do not use offensive, abusive or discriminatory language, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or ableist language
- That you use the litter bins and bottle bins accordingly in classrooms, in social areas, and in the school grounds
- That you respect the school property and the property of other people
- Report any accidental damage you may have caused, or seen, to the main office

Because:

- Like you, other students are entitled to good manners and respect
- Staff are entitled to your respect and co-operation
- Bullying causes fear, hurt, and misery for other students
- Rough behaviour can lead to accidents or injury
- Offensive or abusive language shows disrespect, and can cause hurt
- Keeping the school environment pleasant and litter free is everyone's responsibility
- You would expect the same respect for your property
- The school authorities might have no other way of knowing if damage is caused to property or equipment

4. **<u>That you do your best in class and at your homework</u>**.

This means:

- That you listen in class to your teachers and/or SNAs present and follow their instructions
- That you contribute to class, and participate in class, to the best of your ability
- That you do not interfere with teaching and learning
- That you don't disturb the class
- That you sit in your assigned seat in an orderly manner
- That you do your homework each night, written and oral, to an acceptable standard (Leaving books at home, or in the locker, is considered as non-presentation of homework)
- That you always have your School Journal with you, and take down your class and homework in it consistently

- That you get your journal signed by your parent/guardian each week, following them checking Tyro.
- If you need to leave your classroom, you must get permission from your teacher, with a note of explanation in your school journal
- If you are required by another teacher, that teacher must note this in your School Journal, and you must present this note to your timetabled teacher at the start of the class
- That you help keep your classrooms tidy and place your bag safely under your desk or chair during class so that it does not create a trip hazard

Because:

- The teacher is trying to help you
- Disturbing the class is unfair to others who wish to learn
- Homework is a back-up to the work done in class
- Your School Journal helps you remember what you must do
- Checking Tyro and getting your School Journal signed lets your parents see how you are getting on in class on a day-to-day basis
- Getting your School Journal signed to leave the classroom helps keep a record of your time missed, and lets other teachers know that you have permission to be out of class
- It is important to take responsibility for tidying up after ourselves

5. **That you come in properly prepared for your subjects**.

This means:

- That you have the proper pens, books, and copies required for each class, as laid out by the school and teachers at the beginning of the year
- That you bring in any special materials and equipment needed for class
- All bags, books, and Student Diaries be kept in good condition and free of graffiti
- That you are responsible for your own property

Because:

- It only wastes time if you haven't got your pens, books, etc.
- It is impossible to complete assigned work without the materials/equipment needed
- Graffiti can offend
- Neatness helps students stay organised. Label clearly each item of personal property

6. **That you act in a respectful manner around the school, and travelling to and from the school**

This means:

- You proceed quickly and quietly to each class, taking the shortest route
- You wait quietly for your teacher while lining up outside the classroom
- You should walk in the school, and you should avoid pushing or jostling other students. You should avoid loud and unruly behaviour both inside and outside classrooms. Running or messing in the corridor can lead to accidents or injury. Sanctions will be applied to students who misbehave in the corridor
- You go to your locker only before class begins in the morning, at small break time, at lunchtime, and at the end of the school day. Students must always maintain the provided lock on their locker. The school will not accept responsibility for lost or stolen items. Students are expected to keep their lockers clean and tidy
- You should avoid loitering in the toilets during break times or at any other times
- Eating and drinking is allowed only in the canteen area and at tables provided, and only at specified times. Students are expected to be respectful and polite to canteen staff, and staff on supervision duty during breaktimes, and always follow their instructions
- Taking your break in the manner and area specified and obeying the instructions of the teacher on duty.
- If a student disrupts exams, they will be asked to go home
- That you don't break, damage, or deface school property
- That you must report to a teacher should you notice graffiti, or damage to school property, and especially if you notice graffiti on your own desk or chair
- That chewing gum is totally forbidden in the school building and grounds
- That you do not bring cigarettes, tobacco products, snus, nicotine pouches, vapes, e-cigarettes, lighters or matches to school or to any school-related activity.
- That you must not bring, possess, use, display or supply knives, blades, lasers, firearms or imitation firearms, explosives, fireworks, offensive weapons, or any other item intended or used to threaten, intimidate or cause injury.
- That you leave your mobile phone in your locker, powered off, during the school day, as the use of mobile phones is not permitted on school grounds at any time during the school day
- That you leave all electronic devices at home
- That the production, display, or circulation, via Social Media or Online, of written words, pictures, or other materials, which may intimidate, embarrass, or erode the reputation of another person. Such behaviour is wholly unacceptable and will be addressed under the Code of Behaviour and, where applicable, the school's Bí Cineálta policy, as it may constitute cyberbullying.
- That you must not bring, possess, use, consume, share or supply alcohol, illegal drugs, intoxicating or harmful substances, or associated drug paraphernalia. You must not attend school or any school-related activity while under their influence. This does not apply to medication used in accordance with the school's procedures for managing student medication.
- You may not photograph or record in school without your teacher's permission

Because:

- Orderly behaviour helps to run the school smoothly, and helps keep everyone safe
- Going to the locker during or between classes detracts from learning and disrupts others
- Loitering in toilets leads to congestion
- Specified times and places for eating/drinking helps to keep the school clean and pleasant
- Obeying break time rules and teachers' instructions is safer and helps with supervision
- Others must use the school property, and repairs and replacements are expensive
- Everyone is responsible for helping to keep the school environment pleasant
- Chewing gum destroys flooring, school furniture, tarmac, etc. It is a possible health hazard
- Smoking/Vaping/the use of nicotine replacements on the school premises is prohibited by law, and besides, it is unhealthy and dangerous
- The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices is disruptive during school time
- Matches and lighters are dangerous. Also, this makes it easier not to be tempted to smoke
- Knives, lasers, etc. are banned on Health and Safety grounds
- Tools, equipment, materials or other items must not be removed from practical rooms
- Substance abuse is dangerous, unhealthy, addictive, and illegal. It can cause misery and in the longer term may even destroy a young person's life

Boundaries

The College boundaries are clearly defined, and each student is made aware of the restrictions that apply. 'Boundaries' is taken to mean interior and exterior limits of access for students. Breifne College boundaries are there for the safety and protection of the student body. The College has a responsibility for the students in its care, and so must be aware of where students are at all times. A consistent breach of the College boundaries will be deemed as a serious breach of the College Code of Behaviour.

Students are not permitted to drive or park any vehicle on the school grounds.

School Trips/Games/Activities

Students of Breifne College undertake many school outings during the year. The College will ensure that safe methods of transport are used.

- Students must conduct themselves in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, and refrain from any anti-social behaviour
- All instructions issued by teachers/supervisors/organisers etc. must be followed
- Students' participation on school teams/activities is conditional on the student completing both classwork and homework provided by the teachers during the school day

Sport

Participation in sport is a pivotal aspect of school life in Breifne College.

- Students are required to be punctual for PE classes, or sports games, both home and away
- Students must wear the appropriate PE uniform when participating in PE classes, or playing competitive matches, and must wear the College uniform when attending away matches
- Students supporting teams must behave in a manner that reflects positively on Breifne College. Offensive songs, chants, and provocative actions, do not form part of providing vocal support for the College's teams, and will not be tolerated

Pornography/Offensive material

- Students must not access or have possession of pornographic or offensive material
- The possession and/or disseminating of pornographic material constitutes a serious breach of the College's Code of Behaviour
- All students are required to adhere to, and sign, the College's Acceptable Use Policy
- A breach of this Policy is subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion from the College

Fighting

Physical fighting, play fighting and rough play are unacceptable because they may cause injury or escalate into more serious behaviour. Physical fighting will be regarded as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and may result in suspension or, in the most serious circumstances, expulsion, following an investigation and the application of fair procedures. Play fighting and rough play will be addressed proportionately, having regard to the circumstances and seriousness of the behaviour.

Spectating at, recording/videoing, sharing or posting footage of a serious incident, rather than seeking assistance or reporting it, constitutes a disciplinary matter

Alcohol

Breifne College views with concern the consumption and abuse of alcohol among people of all ages, including the young.

- The consumption of alcohol while the student is under the care of the College is strictly prohibited
- On no account may students bring/share/sell alcoholic drinks on Breifne College property
- Students who attend Breifne College under the influence of alcohol will have breached the Code of Behaviour, and may be subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion from the College

Drugs

The use by a student of prohibited drugs, (as defined by Breifne College Substance Misuse Policy - A drug can be defined as any chemical that causes change in the way a person functions, either mentally, physically, or emotionally, and includes prescription drugs and 'legal highs'), while he/she is in the care of the College is strictly prohibited.

- Any student who uses banned substances, or provides them for another student, will be liable to immediate suspension and/or expulsion from the College

Smoking

In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of the Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all staff and to protect students/learners, visitors, contractors and other persons at School from injury and ill health arising from any work activity.

- Smoking of tobacco products is already prohibited in CMETB premises, as workplaces, by the Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations 2003
- Students found smoking will be subject to immediate suspension

Electronic Smoking/Vaporising Devices/Snus

There is no conclusive medical evidence for or against the safety of e-cigarette use, especially long-term, or the potential effects of passive exposure to emissions from

electronic cigarettes. The World Health Organisation is of the view that the safety of e-cigarettes has not been scientifically demonstrated, and the potential risks they pose for the health of users remains undetermined. E-cigarettes remain unregulated as either a medicine or food product.

Because e-cigarettes resemble ordinary cigarettes, their use may promote or renormalize smoking, disrupt the environment for non-smokers, make it harder for smokers to quit and for the CMETB to support the smoke free policy

- The use of e-cigarettes, vaping, snus, nicotine pouches and/or other tobacco replacement products, is banned from all CMETB schools
- There will be automatic suspension for any student using or seen to be in possession of same.

Mobile Phones and Digital Devices

- Mobile phones, recording devices, school devices (audio or image), personal Smartwatches, or other electronic devices, are not to be used on school grounds under any circumstances, without the expressed permission of a Teacher, Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Taking photographs, or images, and/or audio recordings by students in school is strictly prohibited
- The State Examinations Commission does not allow mobile phones to be used as calculators or clocks during state examinations. This is also the school policy
- If a phone rings, or is produced in a classroom, or between classes, the phone will be confiscated by the teachers and left in the front office. The student can collect the phone at the end of the following school day
- Further breaches of this rule may result in the prohibited item being confiscated for a longer period, or more severe sanctions being imposed. i.e. 2nd offence = 48 hours etc.
- A student whose phone has been confiscated may use the school phone, if necessary
- Where a student is seen by a member of staff with a phone but refuses to hand it over, an investigation will take place and pending the outcome of the investigation, the student may receive an automatic suspension
- The school accepts no responsibility for the loss or theft of a mobile phone or any electronic device in school
- Neither will the school undertake an investigation should a loss or thefts occur
- All students are reminded that videoing any member of the school community during school hours is strictly forbidden, and are also reminded that sharing such content on social media or closed groups has its own legal repercussions

Personal Relationships

Students' personal relationships should not be displayed publicly in the College environment, for example, holding hands, kissing, hugging etc. Intimate or romantic displays of affection, such as prolonged hugging or kissing, are inappropriate in the school setting because they may cause discomfort to others and detract from a respectful, inclusive environment focused on teaching and learning.

Preventative Measures

In Breifne College students will be encouraged in their efforts to uphold the Code of Behaviour by use of the following measures:

(a) The Code of Behaviour will be published on the school website, and a summarised version is published in the Student Journal. Students and their parents are asked to read it, and to sign their agreement with the content when registering. By doing so, they acknowledge their support and co-operation with it. This is to ensure that parents and students understand what our rules are, why they must be adhered to, and what procedures will be followed if the rules are not upheld.

(b) Aspects of the Code are explained at the information meeting held each year for parents of incoming First Years. Parents are encouraged to contact their son/daughter's Year Head if they wish to raise a concern about a behavioural matter. Parents are invited to get involved in the Parents' Association, or to avail themselves of the meetings organised by the association.

(c) At the start of each school year, the Code of Behaviour is explained to all students. This is done to give students the opportunity to think and talk about behaviour, learning, and rules so that they can understand what the Code of Behaviour means.

(d) The Code of Behaviour is published in the Teachers' Handbook. At the beginning of the school year teachers are brought through the implementation of the Code. This is done to promote consistency of practice.

(e) We recognise in Breifne College that effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour. When students are engaged and motivated to learn, it is more likely that their behaviour will be positive. Teachers are encouraged to participate in continuous professional development. Within school, staff development includes exploring different teaching methods such as Assessment for Learning and Differentiation. Regular Subject Department meetings address curriculum needs and promote collegiality among staff.

(f) If a student is in breach of a rule, he/she may be asked to explain (orally or in writing) the rule he/she has breached; to describe what effect this breach has had on members of the school community; and how he/she could act differently in the future to avoid being in breach of the rule. This is done to develop the student's sensitivity and consideration for others, and to assist them in upholding the school rules in the future. The principles of Restorative Justice are also applied where possible. Students are encouraged to speak to their Tutor or Year Head if they wish to raise a concern about a behavioural matter.

(g) School rules, and the reason for them, are discussed as part of the school's pastoral care programme, or as part of SPHE. The notion of tolerance for others, self-control, a sense of fairness, and the principles of natural justice, are also discussed as part of the Religious Education programme in the school.

(h) Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Sexism, Harassment, Violence, and Substance Misuse are discussed with the students during their time in our school,

using current legislation, current affairs, and outside speakers. This is to help the students better understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding, and action on information, and in the line with the values espoused in our school. Various programmes are run in the school to support this.

(i) The school's Anti-Bullying policy, which will be published on the school website and of which a summarised version is published in the Student Journal, sets out the actions taken in relation to alleged breaches of the policy.

Students with Additional Educational Needs

Subject Teachers, Resource Teachers, and Special Needs Assistants, should check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that students with processing needs can understand. This understanding needs to be checked from time to time, especially where a student with processing needs is acting in a way that would usually be in breach of the rules. Teachers may need support in understanding how best to help a student with processing needs to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school.

There may be exceptions in relation to looking at behaviours through the lens of understanding additional behavioural needs.

Rewards

In our school, we use the following methods to reward students for upholding the Code of Behaviour:

- Verbal praise of student by teacher (privately)
- Positive note recorded on Tyro
- Special merit award on Tyro
- Acknowledgement of exemplary behaviour from the Board of Management
- Token of Appreciation
- End of year rewards trip
- Certificates sent home
- Positive comment regarding the student to Tutor or Year Head
- Class outing related to the curriculum
- Brief, positive note, or phone call to parents
- Highlight curricular/extra-curricular achievements on notice boards in classrooms and corridors
- Display of student's work around the school
- Highlight curricular/extra-curricular achievements on school website, school twitter, Facebook accounts, and school newsletter, or in local newspaper
- Publication in the Friday 5

Students with Additional Educational Needs:

- Rewards for students with special educational needs should take account of their learning styles. For all students and especially those with learning difficulties, a reward will have an impact when it is closely linked in time to the behaviour that is being rewarded.

Strategies and Sanctions

The purpose of these strategies and sanctions is to bring about a change in behaviour. They help students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable, and to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

The following strategies and sanctions are used so that our students understand that they have choices about their own behaviour, and that all choices have consequences.

They are scaled to take account of the nature of the incident, as well as the situation leading up to the incident, and are implemented by the staff of the school in accordance with our system of referral.

- A reminder or caution to the student
- Interview or talk with the student outlining the expected behaviour
- Alter the seating arrangement or move the student seat

- Carrying out a useful task in school
- Extra appropriate work assignment
- Student to present to the teacher before school or at break with the work complete and/or an apology
- Note in Student Journal or Tyro
- A fine to cover the cost of repair or replacement
- Removal of privilege
- Consultation with Class Tutor/Year Head/ Deputy Principal
- Telephone call to parents
- Being placed on daily report by Year Head
- Removal of student from scene of incident while still under supervision

Strategies and sanctions for more serious incidences, or for consistent breaches of our Code of Behaviour, include the following (These may be applied but not necessarily in the order listed).

- Giving the student a piece of written work to do, in which they have to outline in writing the rule/rules that they breached; the effects this breach had on themselves and on other members of the school community; and how they can avoid a repeat of this behaviour
- Withdrawal from class
- Behaviour Contract between school, student and parent
- Refer student to Tutor/Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal
- Telephone call to parents
- Formal letter home
- Meeting with parents
- In house suspension
- Suspension from School (see CMETB Suspension and Expulsion policy)
- Lunchtime, afterschool detention or short detention, as defined as a period of detention of about 30mins duration during lunchtime.

Referrals:

The basic principle of a Referral System is that the higher up the ladder an incident is dealt with, the more serious it is viewed. The ladder of referral involves all staff in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour, in a day-to-day and practical way. It gives an ownership of the policy to all staff, and it is appropriate that they be involved as they operate it on an on-going basis.

If a student has a problem which is contributing to their inability to uphold the Code of Behaviour, then the following referrals may be made:

- Referral to Year Head
- Referral to Guidance Counsellor / Behaviour for Learning Teacher
- Referral to Learning Support for testing and/or help in behaviour modification.
- Referral to Deputy Principal
- Referral to Principal

- Referral to appropriate outside agency

**Serious transgressions may mean bypassing of certain steps if deemed appropriate by the Principal*

Roles and responsibilities

The Subject Teacher

The Subject Teacher is the frontline source of support for students. As a leader of learning, and someone with an established relationship of trust, the Subject Teacher will have a strong influence with students. Each teacher has the responsibility for managing behaviour in his/her own classroom and will deal with routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies. The Class Tutor will also advise and guide the student to reflect on disruptive behaviour with a view to changing to more positive behaviours. More serious offences should be dealt with by the Year Head.

The role and responsibilities of the Subject Teacher include the following:

- Promoting teaching and learning in a safe and caring environment
- Giving regular assessments and monitoring progress
- Using the Student Database (Tyro) as a method of communication with home (re: behaviour, work rate, homework, attendance, etc.)
- Keeping records of any incidents which may occur during class on the Student Database
- Each student is equipped with a School Journal, which the Class Tutor signs at the end of each week, and parents/guardians are requested to countersign
- In the event of ongoing problems, referral to the Year Head, via Tyro or email, having utilised and recorded classroom sanctions
- Recording a class attendance for each class, every day, on VS Ware
- Completing progress and exam reports
- Implementing school rules throughout the school
- Contacting parents to discuss areas of concern in their subject area

The Year Head

Each Year Group is assigned a teacher(s) with special responsibility for them. He/she has a pastoral and disciplinary role to play with the class groups that make up this year group.

The role and responsibilities of the Year Head(s) include the following:

- Dealing with referral sheets/complaint notes received from subject teachers
- Contacting parents to discuss areas of concern
- Checking Students' Journals/Student Database on a regular basis
- Ensuring that the student's discipline and academic records are kept up to date in the appropriate files

- Monitoring the uniform and hygiene of students, and taking appropriate action to ensure everyone conforms to the appropriate dress code
- Issuing and monitoring of day and progress report sheets
- Meeting with parents to discuss and resolve any problems or difficulties relating to students. (Parents must contact the school secretary to make an appointment to attend a meeting with the Year Head)
- Attending Year Head meetings with the Principal, and/or Deputy Principal. These meetings will focus on different aspects of school life including discipline, behaviour, student problems, etc. A range of sanctions/recommendations may be decided at these meetings.
- In the event of a serious breach of the College Code of Behaviour, the Year Head will be a Key Investigator collating the necessary files in relation to the incident. In the event, that the Year Head is not able to investigate this incident an alternative Year Head or Deputy Principal will carry out this role

The Deputy Principal or Principal

Students whose behaviour has not been modified despite the school's best efforts will be referred by the Year Head to the Deputy Principal / Principal. If the Principal (or in the absence of the Principal; Deputy Principal) decide that a suspension is warranted, the procedures in our policy on suspension and expulsion will be followed.

Student files are kept confidentially in the main office. Contracts and report sheets are filed; as are copies of letters sent home; contents of telephone conversations; and meetings with parents relating to sanctions and interventions.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians

Admission and enrolment to Breifne College is conditional on parents'/guardians' giving a written undertaking that they find this Code of Behaviour acceptable, and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their son/daughter.

Parents/ Guardians should:

- Provide the school with the necessary contact details, where a responsible adult, designated by the parent/guardian, may be contacted in case of illness or an emergency
- Inform the school of any changes of contact details such as postal address, email address, or phone numbers
- Inform the school of any trauma/difficulty, which may affect the child's performance or behaviour in school
- Inform the school if their child is ill or absent for any reason (Note to be written and signed in school journal)

- Inform the Class Tutor/ Year Head if a student must take prescribed medication during school hours (Students are not allowed to give fellow students any form of medication)
- Explain the Code of Behaviour to their child
- Support the discipline structures within the school to maintain a good learning environment for all
- Ensure that their son/daughter complies with sanctions that may be imposed for breaches of school rules
- Ensure that their child completes any homework given by subject teachers, neatly and to an acceptable standard, and complies with the homework policy
- Ensure that their son/daughter takes home their school bag every day
- Ensure that deadlines for coursework and project work are met, and work is submitted
- Check Tyro on a regular basis for correspondence from teachers
- Check students' results and encourage their son/daughter to achieve to their full potential
- Contact the office and make an appointment if they wish to meet a member of the staff
- Attend Parent/Teacher meetings as organised with their son/daughter

Home School Community Liaison/Communication with Home

- The School Journal is the first line of contact between Subject Teachers and parents
- Parents/Guardians are provided with access details for Tyro where they can monitor attendance, progress, and behaviour records
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the school via email (info@breifnecollege.ie) or by phone 049 433 1735 if they are worried about any aspect of their child's progress in school
- Constructive information regarding their child's progress and behaviour is made through progress reports and parent/teacher meetings
- Parents/Guardians will be informed at an early stage of any discipline problems that may arise with their child.
- Parents/Guardians are informed about school activities by letter, text messages, website, Parents Association meetings, etc.
- Awards, graduations, information meetings, class celebrations, open days/evenings, etc. are held where parents/guardians can attend

Procedures in the Event of Consistent Breaches of the Code of Behaviour:

1. A student may be referred to a member of the Student Care Team, on the advice of the Class Tutor or Year Head, or any teacher who has a concern for the student.
2. Detention; withdrawal of privileges from a student; or withdrawal from class progress reports; may be used for specific transgressions. e.g. poor punctuality, homework not done, or unsatisfactory behaviour.

3. If a student isn't wearing the correct uniform, he/she should have a note of explanation, signed by a parent/guardian, in his/her school diary. If the correct uniform is not worn on three occasions, the student will receive an appropriate sanction, and the parents will be informed. Jackets, coats, and jumpers, not conforming to the school uniform, will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day. Non-uniform jackets, hoodies, tops, trousers, and bottoms will not be tolerated.
4. There may be cases of indiscipline that will require the Principal to act independently of the above procedures in order to maintain the safety of a student or staff.
5. The Year Head in consultation with the Senior Management Team will make the final decision if the school is confident enough about the standard of behaviour of a student to take him/her on a school tour, especially an overnight tour.
6. The Principal has the authority to suspend a student for up to three days if this is deemed necessary. This may be extended to five days in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Procedures for suspension are set out in the attached CMETB Suspension and Expulsions Policy and Procedures.
7. In the case of a student who continues to misbehave, the student's case may be referred to the Board of Management of Breifne College.
8. The Board of Management may advise the permanent exclusion of a student following the procedures laid out in the attached CMETB Suspension and Expulsions Policy and Procedures
9. All incidents of indiscipline are recorded electronically.
10. The school reserves the right to withdraw a student from an extra-curricular activity, or from any other privilege of the school's choice, if the said student is in breach of school rules or regulations. A partial refund of fees may occasionally apply.

Graded System for Minor Incidents:

Breifne College uses Tyro for our Student Management Information System (SMIS). It is an excellent service for our parents/guardians. All parents have been provided with a unique username/login and password which can be used to access Tyro.

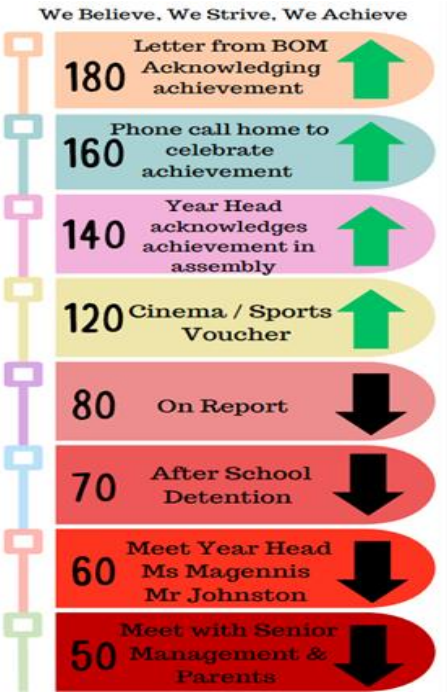
Parents/Guardians can see the following information on Tyro 24/7:

- Reports (current and historic)
- Attendance (daily and by class subject)
- Timetable
- Behaviour
- List of Classes and Teachers

Every student begins on 100 Tyro points:

- Points deducted for minor indiscretions which parents can view

- Indiscretion assigned to Year Head
- Failure to attend lunch time detention is deemed as non-complaint with school disciplinary procedures and may warrant an automatic suspension.
- Contract of acceptable behaviour signed
- If a student reaches 70 points, suspension may be considered
- A student on less than 70 points will be removed from all trips and possible teams
- All Tyro points go on the student's permanent record for six years after the student leaves and is subject to FOI requests



- Should a student be involved in a physical altercation where violence against another student is used, the student(s) will be given up to a three-day suspension, depending on the severity.
- Should a student be involved in a premeditated or planned act of violence/fight, the student(s) will receive a five-day suspension.
- Should acts of violence be repeated over time by a student, the procedures towards the expulsion of the student from the school will be initiated, and the EWO will be informed.

Implementation:

All registered students at the school have a summarised version of the Code of Behaviour in their School Diary. **The Code will be published in its entirety on the school website and is also available from the school upon request.** All staff have a copy of the Code in their Teachers' Handbook.

At the beginning of each year each class is brought through the Code of Behaviour. This is done to give students the opportunity to think and talk about behaviour, learning, and rules, so that they can understand what the Code of Behaviour means for them. At the beginning of the school year teachers are also brought through the main aspects of the implementation of the Code. This is done to promote consistency of practice.

This Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the parents, students, staff, and management of Breifne College. The Code is monitored on a regular basis. Aspects of the Code are discussed formally at Year Head, Staff, Department, and Committee meetings. Teachers are encouraged to communicate concerns and suggestions to the pastoral team.

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in light of changes in legislation and guidance and may be amended following consultation with the school community.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Breifne College at the meeting of the Board on

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Principal

Appendix 1

BREIFNE COLLEGE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

CAVAN AND MONAGHAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

BORD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA AN CHABHÁIN AGUS MHUINEACHÁIN

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Policy Statement

1.1. The suspensions and expulsions policy applies to all schools established and maintained by Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board.

2. Legal framework

2.1. Cavan and Monaghan ETB acknowledges the duty of schools under its control to publish their policy concerning admission and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students pursuant to Section 15 (d) of the Education Act 1998, as amended by Section 7 of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Code of Behaviour in Breifne College specifies:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from a school
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

2.2. Breifne College affirms that its Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Board 2008. The Code of Behaviour addresses:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school
- The plan for promoting good behaviour

- The ways in which a school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- The plan for implementing the code of behaviour
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion

2.3. Breifne College recognises the Right to Appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act, as amended by the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

2.4. In regard to informing Education Welfare Services, Breifne College affirms its statutory obligation pursuant to section 21 (4)(a) of the Education Welfare Act.

2.5. Breifne College affirms that data collected in relation to students and parents is in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and the GDPR.

3 Suspensions

3.1 The Board of Management of Breifne College holds the authority to suspend a student. This authority is devolved under Section 44 (11(a)) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 by Cavan and Monaghan ETB to the Boards of Management of each of the schools under its control.

3.2 Cavan and Monaghan ETB recognises that the Boards of Management of Breifne College may delegate this authority to the Principal of Breifne College. The Board of Management should make a formal delegation arrangement taking due account of the provisions of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013.

3.3 Breifne College recognises that suspension is only one strategy within the Breifne College Code of Behaviour in response to inappropriate behaviour.

3.4. Breifne College recognises that when all other strategies have been exhausted, suspension affords a student time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for their behaviour and to accept the need for the behaviour to change. Breifne College works closely with parents to assist a suspended student to re-join the school community successfully.

3.5. Breifne College acknowledges that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The students continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.

- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The student breaches the Code of Behaviour. (At the discretion of the Principal.)

3.6. Breifne College affirms that all suspensions must be notified to the Board of Management of Breifne College.

3.7. Breifne College affirms that the Education Welfare Services of the Child and Family (Tusla) should be Informed of suspensions in the following circumstances:

- Where the period of suspension is for 6 or more consecutive school days.
- Where the aggregate number of days on which a student has been suspended /absent in any school year is 20 or more days.

3.8. Breifne College affirms that suspension may occur after the following factors have been considered:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The impact and context of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- That all discipline options under the Breifne College Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- That all actions /decisions taken are recorded and all correspondence copied.
- Discussion has occurred with the student and parent(s) regarding the specific behaviour which the school considers unacceptable, and which may lead to suspension.

3.9. The Board of Management of Breifne College affirms that students attending Breifne College may be suspended as follows, pending investigation and /or discussion with parents. The following list is not exhaustive:

- For serious misbehaviour
- For an unacceptable level of repeated misbehaviour
- For bullying, insulting, aggressive or violent behaviour towards others whether in person, by mobile phone or via social media or other electronic means; in the school, or when identifiable with the school
- For the supply/possession /use of alcohol and /or illegal drugs
- For the supply /possession /use of weapons/ hazardous materials
- For behaviour that may be a danger to self or others
- For racist behaviour /supply of racist behaviour/use of racist material
- For behaviour that is contrary to the terms of the Equal Status Act 2000
- For sexual harassment and/or the possession/supply /use of pornographic material.

3.10. Breifne College acknowledges that a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Such grounds may include where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety or welfare of students, staff of the school or any other person.

3.11. A student may be suspended during a state examination and such suspension should normally be approved by the Board of Management of Breifne College. This type of suspension should only be used where there is:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- A threat to the safety or welfare of other students and personnel
- A threat to the right of the other students to do their exam in a calm atmosphere.

3.12. Cavan and Monaghan ETB recognises that the Board of Management of Breifne College may decide as part of the school's policy on sanctions and following consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviour incur suspension as a sanction. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

4 Inappropriate use of Suspension

- Rolling suspension. A student should not be suspended again shortly after they return to Breifne College unless they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension, that fair procedures are observed in full and the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as that standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

- Informal / unacknowledged suspension. Exclusion of a student for part of the school day as a sanction is a suspension.

- Open-ended suspension. Students should not be suspended for an indefinite period. Any such suspension would be regarded as a de-facto expulsion.

5 Procedures in respect of Suspension.

5.1 Cavan and Monaghan ETB affirms that Breifne College is required to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. The school should observe the following procedures

- The student and parent(s) should be informed about the complaint
- The student and parent(s) should be given the opportunity to respond
- In the case of 'immediate' suspension, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. Parents must be notified, and arrangement made for the student to be collected from the school. The school must have due regard for its duty of care for the student.

5.2 A student should not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances. Cavan and Monaghan ETB recognises that the Board of Management of Breifne College should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer that 3 days might be approved. If a suspension of longer than 3 days is being proposed the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. However Cavan and Monaghan ETB recognises that **the Board of Management of Breifne College may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion**. Such authorisation must be recorded in the minutes of meeting of the Board of Management and reviewed on an annual basis.

5.3 Cavan and Monaghan ETB affirms the Boards of Management of Breifne College should formally review any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days for more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

6 Implementing the suspension

6.1 The Principal of Breifne College should notify the Parent(s) and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
- The provision for an appeal to the Department of Education, in the case of a suspension which would bring the days suspended in one academic over 20 days.

6.2 In the case where Parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, Cavan and Monaghan ETB confirms that written notice will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

6.3 A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management of Breifne College decides to remove the suspension for any reason.

7 Section 29 Appeal against Suspension

7.1 Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Minister for Education.

7.2 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.

7.3 An appeal must be made within **42 calendar days** from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.

7.4 Appeals must be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeal Form and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website www.education.ie .

8 Expulsion

8.1 Cavan and Monaghan ETB has the authority to expel a student. This authority may be delegated under Section 44 (11(a)) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 by Cavan and Monaghan ETB to the Board of Management of Breifne College.

8.2 Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Breifne College acknowledges that expulsion of a student is a very serious step and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management of Breifne College in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

8.3 The Board of Management of Breifne College affirms that Breifne College needs to have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion.

Such measures may include:

- Meeting with parents and students to try and find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour should it persist
- Ensuring that all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of relevant support agencies, e.g. Child and Family Agency (Tusla) Education Welfare Services, HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. National Behavioural Support Service JLO, NEPS, NCSE.

8.4 A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

8.5 Before expulsion is considered, school authorities must satisfy themselves that all possibilities have been exhausted for changing the student's behaviour.

8.6 'Automatic Expulsion'
The Board of Management of Breifne College may decide in consultation with the Principal, parents, teachers and students that particular named behaviours would result in 'Automatic' expulsion. This does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedure.

8.7 Expulsion for first or once-off offence
There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management of Breifne College decides that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the Code of Behaviour could include:

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

9 Factors to Consider before proposing to expel a student

9.1 The Board of Management of Breifne College should take the following factors into consideration before considering expelling a student:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions already tried to change the student's behaviour
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

9.2 Expulsion would not be appropriate for the following:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

10 Procedures in respect of expulsion

10.1 A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. The Principal should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the investigation.

10.2 The Principal should inform the student and his/her parents about the specific details of the alleged breach of behaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The Principal must ensure that the student and parents are given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour. The Principal should communicate this in writing to ensure that parents have a permanent record of having been informed.

10.3 A meeting should be arranged between the student and their parents and the Principal of Breifne College before a sanction is imposed.

10.4 Should a student and their parent(s) fail to attend a meeting the Principal should write advising:

- the seriousness of the matter
- the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting
- Failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour

- Record all correspondence

10.5 Where the Principal of Breifne College forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board to consider expulsion.

10.6 The Principal should:

- Inform the student and parents in writing that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents have written records of (a) the allegation, (b) the investigation, (c) written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board with the same comprehensive records as are given to the student and the parents.
- Notify the parents in good time of the date of the hearing with the Board of management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure parents are given enough notice to allow them to prepare for the meeting.

10.7 It is the responsibility of the Board of Management of Breifne College to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.

10.8 The Board of Management should undertake its own review of documentation and all circumstances of the case.

10.9 The Board of Management should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

10.10 Where the Board of Management of Breifne College decides to expel a student it must hold a hearing and this meeting should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.

10.11 Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum; legal representation is not the normal practice, however it may be allowed due to the potentially serious consequences for the student. The Board Secretary should be informed in writing who shall be attending this meeting at least two days prior to the meeting taking place.

10.12 At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has an objective bias in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that an objective bias exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting.

10.13 At the hearing the Principal and the parents, or a student aged 18 or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence and will be available to answer questions from Board Members. Each party should be allowed question the evidence of the other party. Questions should be directed through the Chairperson at the end of each presentation.

10.14 Once the Principal and the Parents have made their cases, they will withdraw from the meeting.

10.15 Should the Board require the professional advice of the Principal, the Principal may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the Principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.

10.16 In the conduct of the hearing the Board must take care to ensure they are and are seen to be impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this in line with good practice and Board procedures.

10.17 When both sides have been heard the Board should ensure that the Principal and Parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

10.18 In hearing and considering a proposed expulsion the Board shall have regard to:

(a) the nature, scale and persistence of any behaviour alleged to have given rise to, or contributed to, the decision made by or on behalf of the Board,

(b) the reasonableness of any efforts made by the school to enable the student to whom the appeal relates (the 'student concerned') to participate in and benefit from education,

(c) the educational interests of the student concerned and the desirability of enabling the student as far as practicable to participate in and benefit from education with his or her peers,

(d) the educational interests of, and the effective provision of education for, other students of the school and the maintenance of a classroom and school environment which is supportive of learning among the students of the school and ensures continuity of instruction provided to students in any classroom concerned and the school,

(e) the safety, health and welfare of teachers, students and staff of the school,

(f) the code of behaviour under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act of 2000 and other relevant policies of the school and —

(i) in the case of that code of behaviour, the extent to which it is in compliance with that section 23 and any guidelines issued under subsection (3) of that section, and

(ii) in the case of those other policies, the extent to which each of them is implemented, promotes equality of access to and participation in education and is in compliance with —

(I) any enactment that imposes duties on schools or their boards,

(II) any relevant guidelines or policies of the Minister,

(g) the duties on schools or their boards imposed by or under any enactment,
(h) guidelines issued pursuant to section 22(7) of the Act of 2000, and
(i) such other matters as the Board considers relevant.

11 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

11.1 Having heard from all the parties involved it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

11.2 When the Board of Management having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion pursuant to section 24 91) of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Board should refer to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) Education Welfare Services reporting procedures for proposed expulsions.

11.3 The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.

11.4 The Board of Management should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and where expulsion is proposed the parents should be informed that the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

12 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

12.1 Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management the EWO will make all reasonable attempts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parent and the student. The EWO will convene a meeting of those parties. These consultations will focus on alternative educational arrangements for the student.

12.2 Pending the consultations in 12.1 the Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. This should only be

considered where the continued presence of the student during this time would seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a risk to the safety and health of students or staff.

13 Confirmation of the decision to expel

13.1 When the 20 day period following notice to the EWO has elapsed and the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. The Board of Management may delegate authority to the Chairperson and Secretary to review this decision of expulsion after the twenty days has expired.

13.2 Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student must be informed of their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.

13.3 Confirmation of the expulsion must be notified to the EWO using the online form.

14 Section 29 Appeal against Expulsion

14.1 The parent(s) or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

14.2 Parents and the student should be informed about their right to appeal to the Minister for Education.

14.3 An appeal may be made by the parent of the student concerned, or by the student concerned where the student has reached the age of 18 years. In accordance with section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) may appoint a person, independent of that Agency, to appeal a decision of a board of management or person acting on behalf of the board of management to permanently exclude a student from a school.

14.4 An appeal must be made within **42 calendar days** from the date of the decision of the board of management or a person acting on behalf of the board of management.

14.5 Appeals must be made in writing on the **Section 29 Appeal Form** and submitted to the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit which has been established within the Department of Education to provide administrative support to enable appeals committees perform their functions. The Section 29 Appeal Form may be downloaded from the Department's website or obtained

directly from the Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit. Contact details for the Unit are available on the Department's website www.education.ie .

15 Review of use of Expulsion

15.1 The Board of Management of Breifne College should review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals.

16 Implementation and Review of Policy

16.1 The Principal and Board of Management of Breifne College will responsible for the implementation of this policy.

16.2 This policy shall be reviewed periodically, in light of emerging legislation and circulated Guidelines from the Department of Education from its official adoption by the Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board and BreifneCollege Board of Management.

This policy was adopted by Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board on 13 November 2013.

This policy was reviewed in May 2015 and adopted by Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board for incorporation into school's Codes of Behaviour on 13 May 2015.

This policy was reviewed in November 2020 in light of commencement of changes to the Section 29 Appeals procedures under the Education (Admission to schools) Act 2018 and approved by the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team on 11 January 2021.

This policy was ratified by the Breifne College Board of Management on ……

Definitions under the Education Act, 1998

''parent'' includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997, or other person acting in *loco parentis* who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts, 1952 to 1998, or, where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter;

''Principal'' means a person appointed under *section 23*;

''school'' means an establishment which—

(*a*) provides primary education to its students and which may also provide early childhood education, or

(*b*) provides post-primary education to its students and which may also provide courses in adult, continuing or vocational education or vocational training, but does not include a school or institution established in accordance with the Children Acts, 1908 to 1989, or a school or institution established or maintained by a health board in accordance with the Health Acts, 1947 to 1996, or the Child Care Act, 1991;

''student'', in relation to a school, means a person enrolled at the school and in relation to a centre for education, means a person registered as a student in that centre;