

## Suspension

Unfortunately, in some circumstances it may be necessary to suspend the student from school. Only the Principal, with the delegated authority, minuted by the Board, and/or Board of Management may suspend a student and if the Principal suspends a student the Principal must inform the Board of Management at its next meeting. This may be for a day or for a longer period and will be sanctioned by the Board of Management. The Board may impose suspensions of more than three days.

1. Reasons for the suspension of a pupil must be linked with the Code of Behaviour, of which the student and Parents/Guardians must have copies, be familiar with its contents, and preferably have signed that they have read and understood the Code.
2. Suspension will usually only occur after the Principal has:
  - ensured all relevant discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
  - ensured all appropriate support personnel (internal and external) have been involved if applicable
  - ensured that discussion has occurred with the student and Parent/Guardian regarding specific misbehaviour which the school considers unacceptable and which may lead to suspension
  - ensured, if possible, that diagnostic assessments (i.e. National Educational Psychological Service - NEPS) have been carried out where appropriate, particularly where unacceptable behaviour is ongoing and consistent
  - provided a formal written warning detailing these behaviours, as well as clear expectations of what is required of the student in the future (except in cases of very serious misconduct)
  - recorded all action taken
  - copied all correspondence
3. Principal may suspend immediately in some circumstances e.g. violence, threats of violence, presence of weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol etc.
4. The Principal may also decide that a longer period of suspension is warranted and may suspend the student pending a meeting of the Board.
5. Length of suspension: the Board may wish to put a maximum on the number of days (e.g. 5 days), which can be applied by the Principal in most circumstances.
6. If a student is suspended for a period of 6 days or more, the Principal must inform the local Educational Welfare Officer.
7. If a student is suspended for a cumulative total of 20 days or more in one year the Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

## Essential Elements in the Procedure for Suspension:

1. Principal makes decision (or, in the Principal's absence, the acting or Deputy Principal) on the basis of the reasons set out in the Code of Behaviour, and the parameters set out by the Board of Management.
2. Student is informed of the decision, she must be informed of the precise grounds which gave rise to a possible suspension, and be given an opportunity to respond, before a decision to suspend is reached and formalised.
3. Parents/Guardians will be contacted and invited to come to the school for a meeting.
4. If suspension is to be immediate (e.g. in the interests of Health & Safety) Parents/Guardians may be informed by phone, with written follow-up.
5. Student to be supervised until suspension takes effect.
6. Student will never be sent home during school day, unless collected by Parent/Guardian (or other suitable arrangement made).
7. The formal letter of notification may include:
  - Notice of the suspension
  - Effective date of the suspension
  - Duration of the suspension
  - Reasons for the suspension
  - Expectations of the student while on suspension (Study Programme may be attached)
  - Importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter
  - A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the Parents/Guardians while on suspension
  - A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed (if the suspension is longer than 6 days, or the student has been suspended for more than 20 days during the school year to date)
  - Information on Appeal rights (internal school appeal / Section 29 Appeal)
  - Requirements which need to be in place when student returns (e.g. written apology, completed assignments etc.)

If consideration is being given to proceeding to expulsion, then the letter must make this clear.

## Procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school

- Students must report to the Principal / Deputy Principal's office with Parents/Guardians for readmission to the school
- Undertakings of good behaviour may be requested in writing
- Agreed conditions (e.g. Counselling, referral to NEPS, other pastoral supports) should be signed by parent and pupil

Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that any formal notification is made in a manner that can be understood by the student and the Parents/Guardians. This is essential when parents have difficulty reading or understanding English.