



Ballymahon Vocational School

Draft Code of Positive Behaviour

Mission Statement of Ballymahon Vocational School

To create and maintain a caring and efficient learning environment founded on trust and co-operation, so that, to the best of our ability, we can prepare our students for their examinations and enable them to reach their full potential as individuals and citizens.

Rationale:

The Board of Ballymahon Vocational School continually reviews the school's Code of Positive Behaviour to ensure that it complies with all legal requirements and good practice as set out by national legislation. It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- The measures that shall 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 the school concerned;
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Code of Positive Behaviour

Developed in accordance with the guidelines of the National Education Welfare Board

It is considered that by reading this policy you have made yourself aware of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, understand the reasons behind the Code and that you agree with this policy. It is also considered that by agreeing to and signing up to the terms of this policy that you have fulfilled the final criteria for admissions into Ballymahon Vocational School.

Parents/ Guardians are advised that students that have been accepted and choose to attend Ballymahon Vocational School are bound to the terms of this policy and Code.

Ballymahon Vocational School believes that its Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Behaviour is firmly rooted in mutual respect, justice, the common good and concern for health and safety.

An essential element of this is good, open communication between the partners. The school believes that such an approach will be beneficial for students, teachers, management, parents/guardians and the Board of Management alike.

It should also encourage students to take a positive view of co-operation and interdependence into their adult lives. The Positive Behaviour Policy will have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all the parties concerned within the school.

All students attending Ballymahon Vocational School are actively encouraged to make a positive impact on the school community through positive behaviour.

In our school, positive behavior is considered to be a form of training, which empowers students to make appropriate choices in a supportive environment.

Child Protection

Please refer to Ballymahon Vocational School's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment which is available on request and is on prominent display in the school entrance.

Code of Behaviour Definition and Philosophy

The code of behaviour comprises the programmes, practices and procedures which form the school's overall plan for promoting positive behaviour and maintaining a positive learning environment. The code reflects our philosophy of justice and equality and the school's Mission Statement. It seeks to ensure and protect the rights of the school community and the rights of the individual within that community. The Code endeavours to promote mutual respect between staff, students, parents, Board of Management and the wider community. Ballymahon Vocational School is grateful that parents/guardians have chosen Ballymahon Vocational School to entrust their child to its care. We are committed to the holistic development and care of each of our students.

Legal Basis

The code is prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the NEWB, and in compliance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, Education Act 1998, Education (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2007, Equal Status Act 2000 and Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004. This Code also has implemented the activated sections of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act of 2018. The code complies with current legislation as enshrined in the various education acts and Health and Safety legislation, and relevant constitutional and international provisions and conventions.

(See NEWB Developing a code of behaviour: guidelines for schools, pp 7-9).

Aims of the Code of Positive Behaviour

The whole school review of the code of behaviour endeavours to:

- Set standards of behaviour for all members of the school community, staff, students, parents and the Board of Management.
- Promote a just, caring and secure environment for staff, students and the wider school community.
- Foster an orderly, harmonious school where high expectations of behaviour are evident and supported.
- Enable the school to support the learning of **every student**.
- Encourage and teach students to take personal responsibility for their behaviour for learning.
- Support students to mature into responsible participating citizens.
- Promote positive behaviour for learning.
- Build positive relationships of mutual respect among students, staff and parents.
- Implement effective procedures which allow for the day to day running of the school and which meet the demands of current legislation.
- Outline the structure of fair, consistent and agreed sanctions/interventions that will be used in response to negative behaviour.
- Outline the systematic interventions to be used when a student repeatedly misbehaves.
- Promote positive behaviour, personal responsibility and self-discipline.
- Outline how positive behaviour is encouraged.
- Foster a spirit of cooperation and good communication between all partners in the school community.
- Enable the partners to promote a positive image of the school in the wider community.

Policy Summary

At Ballymahon Vocational School we have high expectations of our students. In order to reach those expectations, we believe they should feel safe and feel happy to work and play at school, free from any adverse effects caused by the behaviour or attitudes of others. It is fundamental to our core values that all members of the school community, including students, staff and parents, should behave with due respect for each other, for each other's property and for the school's good reputation. We actively seek and expect the support of parents in this endeavour, which is why we insist that parents make a commitment to the school from the outset. We expect a genuine commitment from parents/guardians to fully and actively support the school as necessary in upholding the Code of Behaviour, by encouraging and assisting their child in complying with the code also. Our aim is that all students realise their full potential and complete their secondary education with us successfully.

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM RULES

The school and classroom rules translate standards into practical guidance relating to the behaviour expected of students. Rules provide clear boundaries. They describe in simple terms how to behave in order to learn well and to develop into mature and responsible individuals.

PASTORAL FRAMEWORK

School rules and the code of behaviour provide the framework which allows effective teaching, learning and positive social development to take place. Rules inevitably imply sanctions and these are clearly stated. It is equally important that we emphasise the balance of sanctions with our Pastoral Care philosophy of caring for the overall welfare of students which permeates all interactions between staff and students.

Class Teachers:

Class teachers advise students how to behave properly in order to maximise teaching and learning in the classroom.

Year Heads:

The Year Head encourages good student behaviour and attendance and liaises with class teachers, tutor, counsellor, parents/guardians and senior management. Year Heads also monitor academic progress and discuss individual academic difficulties with students, parents/guardians and teachers with a view to furthering the student's learning and educational opportunities.

Guidance Counsellor:

The Guidance Counsellor has a supportive role for all students who may be experiencing personal or school related difficulties in addition to providing guidance on career opportunities.

POSITIVE RECOGNITION/PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

In our school we have agreed:

1. To a Reward System:

The school is committed to a policy of recognition, encouragement and reward of positive behaviour and achievement. It has in place good school and class routines where students are clear on the boundaries and expectations. Students are given recognition for

- Outstanding achievements
- Sporting accomplishments
- Extra-curricular success
- Attendance
- Good manners and demeanour
- Consistent high level of effort.

Acknowledgement may take the form of:

- Involvement in positions of responsibility e.g. Committees, Student Council, Prefects, Mentors, representing the school, etc.
 - Positive points on VSWare
 - Praise from staff members, privately or publicly
 - An affirmative stamp/note in student Journal/or on VSWare (At teacher discretion)
 - A postcard home (JCSP Initiative)
 - Feedback during parent/teacher meetings
 - Feedback during general assembly
 - Announcement over the intercom
 - Student of the Month – Vouchers
 - Green Platform Notice Board
 - Articles in local newspapers / Newslink / Yearbook
 - Certificate of Merit
 - End of Year School Awards Ceremony
- Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

It is our school's aim at all times to encourage each student to fulfil his/her educational potential, academically and in every other respect.

2. To have Respect for Others:

This includes:

(a) Recognising the rights of others e.g.

- The right to grow as a responsible person
- The right parents/guardians have to expect good results
- The right the teacher has to do her/his work without having to spend undue time dealing with students' negative behaviours/inattention.
- The right each member of the class has to learn.

- The expectation of school authorities that each student will act in a reasonable and fair manner in and around the school, on their way to and from school and while representing the school on school trips, sporting events etc.

(b) Behaving in an orderly manner:

- Students should move quickly and quietly, keeping to the left in single file on the stairs, corridors and doorways.
- Disruptive behaviour on corridors or in class will not be tolerated.
- Disruptive behaviour on the way to and from school will not be tolerated.
- Lockers should be visited prior to 9.00 a.m. and during breaks only.
- Lockers are out of bounds between classes and during class time.

(c) Not bullying any other person:

Bullying, rough conduct, name-calling, isolation or any other form of intimidation of students by other students is totally unacceptable. Any instances of such behaviour will be dealt with as a serious breach of good order. The use of bad language will not be tolerated. If you think you are being bullied talk to a teacher, Year Head or a member of the anti-bullying team. Remember that silence is the bully's greatest weapon.

(d) Being a team player:

Student Council: We encourage students to take part in the development of school policies and procedures. Each year a new council is formed and elected members liaise with class representatives from each year group. Existing members may be given a chance to step down and new members the opportunity to step up.

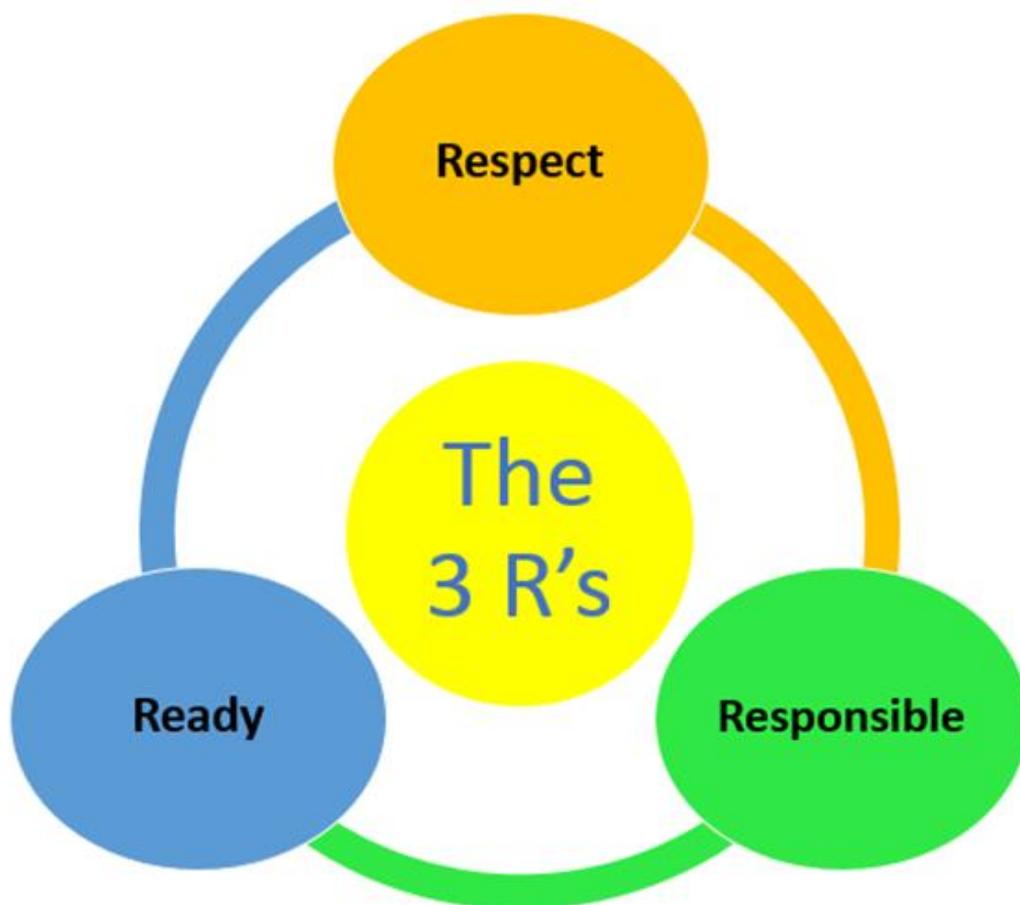
Prefects: Transition year, 5th year and 6th year students can apply to become a prefect. Prefects help in the day to day running of the school.

Student Mentors: Members of the student body can become part of our mentoring programme. Mentors give peer support to junior members of the school community (usually 1st Years). Mentors play a very valuable role in our school community. It is a great honour and privilege to be assigned the role of mentor in Ballymahon Vocational School and students are expected to respect the role designated to them.

Ballymahon Vocational School Expectations

To reach our potential we are...

Ready, Respectful and Responsible



The standard expected with regard to any issue not covered below is that which people would regard as decent and reasonable behaviour.

- 1. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to be in attendance every day. They are likewise expected to be in the correct classroom in time for the commencement of each class. School begins at 9:00am. Students will be deemed late if they arrive to school after this time. In the morning and at lunch a warning bell will sound five minutes before class, all students should be in class on time. Students are also expected to eat in their designated areas and rest in the communal areas during lunch and breaks. All students remain on the school grounds during break and lunch. Senior Students have the*

opportunity to leave the school grounds for lunch. Failure to abide by the above will result in a sanction.

This means:

- Students attend everyday unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- Students are expected to be on time for school/assembly each day and to be on time for each class throughout the school day.
- Students arrive at all classes on time and do not delay on the way to class.
- Parents/guardians must ring the school and leave a voice-mail on the Attendance Message minder to explain any absence.
- Students must provide a note from parents/guardians explaining any unavoidable absences.
- Absent/Late notes are handed in to the Year Head during morning assembly.
- Students are expected to move from one class to another quickly and with care without visiting toilets or lockers etc. Students who loiter will be subject to sanctions.
- A 'keep left' system is used on the stairways and other areas in the school to promote safety and this must be adhered to.
- Students are not permitted to eat or drink in any classroom or any area other than the designated canteen area. This includes water.

Because:

- It is difficult for a student to 'catch-up' on topics taught in class while he/she was absent.
- The school has a duty-of-care to its students.
- A student arriving late unfairly disrupts the teaching/learning of others in the class.
- All students have a duty-of-care to our school community as we endorse the Green Schools' Code, keeping all areas litter free and clean. We are committed to reducing our refuse bill and to this end it is prohibited to bring excess packaging/litter/plastics onto the grounds of Ballymahon Vocational School. Students may be required to bring such litter/refuse home to dispose of.

2. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to have the official School Journal/Homework Diary in all classes and to present it to a teacher when requested.

This means:

- Students are expected to place the School Journal/Homework Diary in front of them on their desk at the beginning of each class.
- Students are expected to record homework/assignments in the journal during each class.
- Students are required to maintain their School Journal/Homework Diary in pristine condition so as to allow for easy inspection by parents/guardians or teachers.
- Replacement cost of lost/defaced journal will be €5.00.

Because:

- Along with our VSWare system, the School Journal/Homework Diary is the primary method of communication between the school and home.
- It is important to maintain an accurate record of work assigned during the year to aid with revision at the end of each school year.
- School authorities can request access to the Homework Diary at any time.

- Absences from school and/or class will be recorded in students' School Journal/Homework Diary.
3. ***All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to strive for academic excellence (i.e. students will always try to do their best at classwork and at homework).***

This means:

- All students are issued with an official School Journal/Homework Diary by the school and are required to have it in class at all times.
- Failure to produce this journal when required to do so by a teacher is a breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Students are to retain the official School Journal/Homework Diary to record homework.
- Students are to come properly prepared for all subjects, i.e. have all textbooks, copies, pens and any other specialist equipment required.
- Students are required to listen to teachers and concentrate on learning.
- Students must allow teachers to teach and fellow students to learn.
- Students must not disturb the class or the intended learning environment.
- Students are required to complete homework (written and non-written) each night. It must be completed to the highest possible standard or evidence of an adequate and meaningful attempt should be made.
- Students must listen to teachers, obey class procedures and ensure their behaviour never disrupts the learning of others.
- Students are expected to report to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Staff-Room if a class is unsupervised briefly.
- Students must attend every class assigned to them on their timetable. Students must not absent themselves from class without the class teacher's permission. Students may be given a Corridor Pass, at the discretion of the class teacher.
- Visits to the toilets and lockers, routine messages, etc. shall be restricted to break times.
- Unauthorised departures from the school within the school hours are regarded as serious transgressions and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Students may only enter classrooms, laboratories, gymnasium and football pitch when instructed to do so by a staff member.
- Students involved in extra-curricular activities must do homework for the classes they have missed. **It is their responsibility to find out what homework was given. If homework is repeatedly not presented, students will lose their privilege to participate in any such extra-curricular activity (For further information – see Homework Policy).**

Because:

- The School Journal/Homework Diary may also be used by teachers to record comments. It may be examined and signed at any time by Year Heads and must be signed weekly by parents/guardians.
- Homework reinforces and backs-up what has been done in class and helps students prepare for exams.
- Disruptive behaviour is unfair to others who are trying to learn.

4. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to be properly prepared for each subject and each class.

This means:

- Students have the proper pens, pencils, copies, textbooks, materials, etc. as instructed by their teacher.
- Students have any special equipment needed for particular subjects; e.g. P.E. gear, drawing equipment, etc.
- Students can access lockers only at the following times: (i) before 1st class, (ii) during 'little-break', and (iii) during lunch. At these times students bring all the materials needed for the 3-4 classes that follow ensuring they are in class on time.

Because:

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

5. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to wear full school uniform and to present themselves in accordance with school Uniform Policy. In the interest of overall appearance of pupils as individuals and as a group, full school uniform is to be worn in the school at all times and at all school functions. This includes occasions such as public and in-house examinations. Students may wear sports gear strictly for the duration of sports activities only.

Parents/guardians must ring the school and leave a voice-mail on the Attendance Message minder to explain any uniform issues which may arise.

Any one of the following will apply where there is any deviation from the wearing of full school uniform as stated in the uniform policy:

- The student will be provided with the correct uniform by the school attendant on the first occasion only, **which they must wear**. If a refusal is given the student will be sent home.
- If wearing a jacket, students must wear the school crested BLACK jacket. Students are not permitted to carry jackets around.
- In house suspension will apply, during which the student will follow a study plan for normal timetabled classes.

This means:

- That students wear uniform as designated in the Uniform Policy.
- Students are expected to maintain the school's reputation and high standards by the manner in which they wear their uniform. Their appearance reflects positively on themselves, their families and their school.
- Full uniform should be worn with pride from the time students leave home until they return, and during out of school activities.

Because:

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

6. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to show courtesy, manners and respect to people (students, staff, visitors, etc.) at all times and in all places; this includes following instructions from teachers and others in authority. Students are not permitted to congregate or loiter/otherwise at the front of the school or in the carpark at any time.

This means:

- Every individual has the right to be treated with respect, tolerance, understanding and in a just manner.
- Being fair to everyone.
- Students must respect the property of fellow students and teachers.
- Students 'look-out-for' and are supportive of their fellow students and help other students if they need help.
- Students do not engage in nor arrange for others to engage in any form of bullying, intimidation or 'picking-on' other people.
- Students do not arrange for others to bully, intimidate or 'pick-on' other people.
- Students found to be engaging in or condoning bullying or other such disrespectful behaviour towards other students will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the code of positive behaviour sanctions.
- Students do not engage in fighting and will not arrange fights in the school or elsewhere. Any student who engages in fighting will come before the school authorities as this is a very serious transgression.
- Students are a representative of Ballymahon Vocational School at all times before, during and after school while in school uniform and should behave in a manner in accordance with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.
- When in the school building students will walk to and from timetabled classes. Students will not engage in unsafe running, jostling, pushing, shoving and will report same to their teachers/school management.
- Students extend courtesy, manners, and respect to all people.
- Students refrain from using bad and inappropriate language in class and on the school grounds. This also includes behaviour down town and on all bus trips
- Students will refrain from using a different language when English is the medium of communication between the student and teacher at Ballymahon Vocational School.
- Students follow the instructions of teachers and others in authority without causing any disruption and never leave class without permission/ use of Corridor Pass at teacher discretion.
- School property is respected.
- If a student absents themselves from the school grounds without permission, a parent/guardian will be called to collect the student due to Health and Safety risks caused by the student being unsupervised. The student may also be given an internal suspension if deemed appropriate.
- The school reserves the right to access CCTV footage in the investigation of any event which warrants such scrutiny/examination.

- All students show politeness, respect and courteous co-operation to all school staff, fellow students, visitors to the school, bus drivers and members of the community at all times.

These guidelines as outlined under paragraph 6 above apply at all times including when you are in class, on the school premises, when on school related activities such as games, tours, debates, theatre visits, etc. Students are also expected to show courtesy to teachers and fellow students outside of school times to avoid behaviours which may have a negative impact/effect on them when they are in school.

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

Because:

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

7. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to respect school property and the property of others and to treat the property of others with the utmost care and respect.

This means:

- Students refrain from any attempt at destroying, defacing (e.g. graffiti), damaging and/or vandalising school property (buildings, plant, equipment, fittings, materials, shrubs, trees, etc.) or the property of others (clothing, books, equipment, cars. etc.)
- Students refrain from littering any area of the school grounds and its environs.
- Each student/class group must accept responsibility for acting in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. Remember that each student is expected to act in accordance with the Code of Positive Behaviour and that every student is expected to promote truth and honesty when an investigation into an incident is underway. Students who hamper or impede the progress of such investigations shall be subject to sanctions.

Because:

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

8. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to eat/drink only in designated areas and only at allocated times and to refrain entirely from using 'chewing-gum'.

This means:

- Students eat/drink only in designated areas and only at designated times.
- Students refrain entirely from chewing gum on the school premises and properly dispose of chewing-gum (i.e. in litter bins) as they enter the school building.
- Junk food/unhealthy food and stimulant drink items are prohibited from the grounds of Ballymahon Vocational School and if found, will be confiscated. **Refer to healthy eating policy. Unhealthy Food/ Junk Food may be defined as non wholesome food or food with a high sugar content and of a low nutritional value.**
- Water is the only drink permitted.
- Students are to keep water in their bags/lockers and not on display in classrooms. Carrying drinks throughout the school building is not permitted and is not necessary as adequate water fountains are available throughout the school grounds.
- Plastic bottles are prohibited, in line with our Green Schools' Code. Students are encouraged to purchase reusable water bottles which are kept out of sight at all times. School authorities may confiscate any single use water bottles as necessary as water spillage may create a Health & Safety risk in and around the school grounds.

Because:

- Eating/drinking other than in designated areas and at designated times causes disruption and the mess created often damages books, copies etc., while also creating a Health & Safety issue.
- When 'stuck' underneath desks, tables, chairs etc. chewing-gum is very unhygienic.
- Significant additional expense is incurred when cleaning up food, drink and chewing-gum if consumed throughout the school building.
- Soft/stimulant drinks are not good for students' health. Drinking water promotes good health but also allows the opportunity for Ballymahon Vocational School to encourage a lifestyle that avoids obesity.
- Excessive drinking of water is not recommended as this leads to frequent use of toilet facilities which is in breach of this Code of Behaviour. Any student who has a medical condition which necessitates frequent toilet visits should furnish a medical cert to the relevant school authority without delay.

9. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to observe the law relating to smoking and illicit drugs and substances. The possession or distribution of mind-altering substances, legal or illegal, while in school or on school outings is not permitted. The school has a zero tolerance policy in relation to the possession, sale and use of mind altering substances and will be considered a serious breach of this Code of Behaviour and will therefore attract the ultimate sanction of exclusion , if necessary to preserve the school ethos and the Health and Safety of the School community, not to mention , upholding the Law of the Land.

This means:

- Students must refrain from smoking, consuming, possessing, supplying and/or arranging for the supply of cigarettes (including but not limited to e-cigarettes, vaping or similar) alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances within the school and its environs.
- All students must vacate the bathroom facilities swiftly and there should be no loitering. Loitering in and of itself is sanctionable under the Code of Behaviour.
- Each student/class group must accept responsibility for acting in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. Remember that each student is expected to act in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and that every student is expected to promote truth and honesty when an investigation into an incident is underway. Students who hamper or impede the progress of such investigations shall be subject to sanctions. Time wasting is seen as a serious transgression in our school, placing a severe strain on time and resources and will not be tolerated. Time wasting will be subject to sanctions.

Because:

- Smoking on government property is against the law and therefore Ballymahon Vocational School has placed the School Community, Health and Safety above all else and endeavours to educate the student in its broadest sense, which includes, but not limited to, upholding the Law of the land.
- The school grounds and buildings are a smoke-free zone.
- Smoking runs counter to Health & Safety and moral issues; especially considering the potential for addiction, serious ill-health and death.

10. All students of Ballymahon Vocational School are expected to have their mobile phones and camera phones 'powered-off' and out of sight unless otherwise instructed by their teacher. While recognising their uses, especially in emergencies, the school believes that they can act as major distraction in the classroom environment and beyond. Mobile phones and other electronic devices, such as earphones, MP3 players, I-pods are forbidden in the school setting or and may not be used without the explicit permission of the teacher. This includes all items such as Apple watches etc.

(Ref: Mobile Phone Policy)

This means:

- Mobile phones should not be visible or turned on during class time without the teachers' permission. If a teacher or staff member sees a mobile phone it will be confiscated. It must be given to the teacher or staff member on request and it will be left in the school office for ONE WEEK
- No photographs, video or audio recordings may be made without the expressed approval of a member of the teaching staff and no images should be posted online without the written consent and approval of all parties/students involved.
- Mobile phones/tablets/social media or any other such devices/media **must not** be used to defame any member of the school community and/or outside personnel/visitors/visiting school members.

- The school should never be brought into disrepute by any method of communication outlined above or, indeed, by any other method.
- Photographs or audio/video recordings must not be made of another person in school, its environs and/or at any school event without prior permission.
- Any student that has reason to believe that a video or picture that may have been taken of them outside of school, that has been circulating in school, must have some evidence of the photograph or video when reporting it to school management.
- Anything happening outside school is a matter for the gardaí. If in school, parents/guardians must be cognisant that it will **also** be reported to Gardaí as it is a criminal offence
- When reporting it to school management, parents/guardians should also take steps to report inappropriate social media usage to the Gardaí.
- Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in the classroom unless instructed to do so by the teacher.
- Students may not borrow another person's mobile telephone and use it.
- Students are not allowed to use recording equipment on school grounds.
- Students are **not allowed** to contact parents/guardians or other people **using their own or another person's mobile phone** or device. In case of an emergency, parents/guardians are contactable through the school office at all times.
- Parents should not expect communication with the student, nor should they make communication with their child during the course of the school day. If contact with home is necessary, the phone in the school office is always available to students/parents/guardians.

Because:

- Mobile phones cause disruption.
- Mobile phones can be used for intimidating, bullying or demeaning other people.
- The school telephone can be used for urgent communication with parents/guardians and is the only mode of communication permissible.
- It is illegal to photograph/record any individual without the express permission of that individual.

*Mobile phones and other devices seen or heard between 9:05 am and 3:55pm will be confiscated, put into an envelope and left in the Main Office for **ONE WEEK**. There will be no exceptions. The phone may be collected in the Office by prior arrangement after **ONE WEEK**. Upon enrolment and signing up to the Admission Policy, parents/ guardians accept the tenets of our school's ICT Acceptable Use and Mobile Phone Policy. A copy of each will be left in the Main Office.*

General Procedures in Ballymahon Vocational School

TOILET PROCEDURES:

Students are requested to use the toilets before and after school and during break times.

During class time the following will apply:

- Students should ask the teacher for permission to go to the toilet in emergency cases only.
- The class teacher will record Toilet Request on VSWARE.
- Teacher will issue CORRIDOR PASS.

- Teachers should not allow access to the toilets while other students from their class are there.
- Excessive use of this procedure will not be permitted.
- Students who require access to toilet facilities during class time are requested to furnish the school authorities with a medical certificate to this effect. This should happen as soon as the medical issue is diagnosed so as to alleviate confusion.

AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES:

Each day after school, all students should leave the school premises immediately. Only students directly supervised by a staff member (students involved in games, extra class or evening study) should be on the school premises after classes cease.

BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME:

The conduct of pupils on their way to and from the school is as important as that within the school. Students are reminded to behave in a mannerly way on the road and on the bus. The wearing of seatbelts on all buses is a legal requirement. Only students waiting on school buses should remain at the school gate after school. These students should do so in a safe manner. It is Important for Parents to realise that it is not a matter for the school if students misbehave while off school grounds and outside the environs of the school day and while outside the remit of normal school supervision responsibility. The school reserves the right to impose in-house sanctions if a pupil's activities outside the school have a detrimental effect on the pupil's behaviour or academic performance in school or indeed on the well-being of any other pupil in this school which includes, but is not limited to, the bringing into disrepute the Schools' Reputation.

PE:

All students are obliged to take part in all physical education classes. This is an integral part of our Wellbeing programme. Students with medical conditions, which prohibit such involvement, must provide a medical certificate. Students failing to participate (no gear etc.) will have sanctions imposed. Repeated instances of such behaviour will fall under the remit of the Code of Positive Behaviour and will be considered a breach of good order.

PASTORAL CARE:

The basic objectives of our school are to foster the intellectual, social, spiritual, moral, athletic, cultural and physical development of each student. Each student is seen as an individual whose talents should be realised to the full. Each year group has a Year Head. The Year Head has the overall responsibility for discipline, monitoring academic progress, absences, lateness, disciplinary problems and the overall personal development of each student. Many support structures have been put in place to encourage, support and motivate students, such as evening study, extra tuition, extra-curricular activities, mentors, etc.

CONDUCT DURING EXAMINATIONS (IN-HOUSE AND STATE):

Students must sit in the assigned seat during examinations. Students who are talking or deemed to be cheating will have their paper cancelled and will not have their paper graded. Parents will be called by the Year Head and sanctions may be imposed. **The school**

will decide the sanction where the exam is school based, Sanctions relating to the State Exams will be determined by the State Examinations Commission.

SICKNESS:

Students should not come to school if they are sick. To avoid confusion, strict procedures must be adhered to:

- Students who feel ill may only report to Reception/Office with the express permission of the class teacher.
- The school will try to contact parents and ask them to arrange to take the student home. Parents may nominate a person/persons who will take responsibility for their son/daughter if he/she is ill and they are not available.
- The students will return to class pending arrival of parent/guardian.
- If the student's condition gives cause for anxiety, he/she may be brought to a doctor, or a doctor called to the school. If a doctor is not available, the school may call for an ambulance.
- Medical expenses are the responsibility of parents.
- In keeping with modern accepted practice and advice, no medication will be dispensed to students by school staff.
- Students are not permitted to give prescribed/unprescribed medication to other students.

ATTENDANCE:

- Students are required to attend school each day. In the case of unexplained absences, the Year Head will contact parents/guardians. Before the first class on the day of return from an absence, a letter from a parent/guardian with the dates and reason for absence is to be given to the Year Head during morning assembly. This letter will be kept on file. If a student misses twenty school days in one year the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.
- If a student has to leave school at some stage during the day the PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST sign out the student at the Principals Office.
- Students are not allowed to leave the school for any reason throughout the day, without permission. Unauthorised departures from school within the school hours are regarded as serious transgressions and a student found in breach of this rule may be suspended and or expelled at the discretion of the school board. Students must present for all classes throughout the school day. Unauthorised absences will not be tolerated.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

All students are encouraged to participate in some area of extra-curricular activities. However, students and particularly examination students are discouraged to take on too many activities. If a student misses class because of an extra-curricular activity the onus is on the student to find out what homework has been given and to complete same. Students representing the school or involved in extra-curricular activity must wear the school uniform and their behaviour should reflect the high standards of the school. Students may only attend school activities at venues away from the school either by the mode of transport provided by the school or with their parents.

MISUSE OF FIREWORKS/POSSESSION OF WEAPONS/DAMAGE:

- Incidents involving the above constitute matters which come within the remit of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990 and are matters which will not be dealt with by the school, save for to report the incident to the Gardaí, who will apply the sanctions

as set out by law. It cannot be expressed strongly enough, the seriousness of this area so we at Ballymahon Vocational School remind Parents to impress this on their children as it could have life-long consequences

- Bangers and fireworks are not permitted in the school or school grounds. Students caught in possession of fireworks will receive an automatic suspension of three days. Students selling or supplying bangers or fireworks will be suspended and the incident reported to the Gardaí. Findings in a Garda Investigation may lead to further sanctions in school.
- If an incident happens and students are in possession of information, students are expected to assist in the investigation of the incident. Silence is not acceptable.
- Students are not permitted to bring any kind of knife or dangerous implement to school.
- Possession of same will result in automatic suspension.

Breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour and the resulting sanctions in Ballymahon Vocational School

All breaches of the Code of Behaviour will be fully investigated with the basic tenets of natural justice being applied. A recording system will be in place, and all parties to the dispute will have an opportunity to explain their position.

A number of sanctions will be in place which will be appropriate and proportionate. The purpose of the sanction(s) is to bring about rehabilitation and this will be explained to students. Each situation is different and therefore discretion is an important consideration.

Disciplinary Structures

Individual Subject Teachers will deal with minor misdemeanours in class.

- Each teacher has the responsibility for the creation of a positive learning atmosphere in his/her classroom and to set high expectations.
- Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and share, with other teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents a common responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds.
- Teachers should make every effort to solve any low-level discipline problems themselves as they arise.
- Each teacher has the responsibility to implement the Code of Positive Behaviour and to record all examples and occasions of positive behaviour. Each teacher:
 - Has the responsibility to record accurate and factual incidents of breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour on VSWare and Attendance Data.
 - Has the responsibility to refer a student who persistently breaches the Code of Positive Behaviour to the relevant Year Head and/or Deputy Principal.
 - Has the responsibility to impose fair sanctions for breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour.
 - Has the responsibility to communicate with parents regarding students' progress, work and behaviour.
 - Has the responsibility to participate in reviews of the Code of Positive Behaviour.
 - Has the responsibility to model the school's standard of behaviour in their dealings with students, each other, other staff and parents/guardians.
 - Has the responsibility to affirm and acknowledge good and/or improving behaviour of students on an ongoing basis on VSWare.

- Although Parental Access to VSWare is available, an additional Parental Alert Letter may be issued after two instances of misbehaviour, or indeed at any stage where there is teacher concern. The PAL document is available in the staff room and teachers will complete and leave into the school office to be posted. Teachers are asked to keep a record of PAL letters sent, photocopy same and bring to the attention of the relevant Year Head.
- Three issues of misbehaviour recorded on VSWare are to be brought to the attention of Year Heads.
- The Year Head will meet with any pupil referred to him/her.
- Guidance Counsellor: With students who appear to have consistent difficulties, or if a student is perceived to be acting "out of character", it may be identified that a more pastoral care approach is necessitated (The intervention of School Completion Programme or Guidance Counsellor may be called upon here).
- The Deputy Principal will meet a student who has failed to follow the directions of the Year Head.
- **Internal Suspensions:** The purpose of an internal suspension is to allow for a student to reflect on their actions, to catch up on work missed by removing themselves from class and the possibility to speak to relevant teachers/management to help resolve the situation. Internal suspensions may also be used in other situations if deemed appropriate and/or on Health & Safety grounds.
- The Principal may suspend the student for a definite period of time. Parents will be contacted before the suspension takes place.

Disciplinary Measures to be taken:

1. Advice from the teacher
2. Warning from the teacher
3. Classroom management of issue by teacher.
4. After three such incidences of misbehaviour, the behaviour is recorded on VSWare.
5. At any stage the Parental Advisory Letter may be sent to indicate teacher concern.
6. Withdrawal of privileges (to include Student Report Card/ withdrawal from extracurricular activities/downtown privileges/ community service in the school/extra written work at lunch) may be sanctioned at any stage after Step 4.
7. On report, with Support Card and the comments communicated to parents and signed daily.
8. Detention at lunch time. N.B. Lunchtime detention is for the duration of the break and will necessitate the bringing of a packed lunch. It is the responsibility of the teacher who gives lunchtime detention to supervise same.
9. Referral to Year Head and Guidance Counsellor/SCP Intervention where appropriate.
10. Referral to the Discipline Committee (at the discretion of School Authorities can happen at any time, depending on the seriousness of the incident).
11. Referral to the Deputy Principal, Principal and Guidance Counsellor.
12. Parents informed by telephone or letter.
13. Friday Detention after school. The School will inform the parent/guardian of the date, time and reason for the after-school detention. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure their son/daughter is on time and that dropping off and collection will be solely their responsibility.
14. Parents/Guardians are asked to come to the school to discuss those issues concerning their child. At the discretion of the School Authorities this can happen at any time, depending on the seriousness of the incident.

15. A Behaviour Contract may be drawn up at any time, at the discretion of the school authorities.
16. Suspension for a given number of days
17. Expulsion. It is the policy of this school that students will be asked to provide a written account of either their own or somebody else's actions.

Summary of Disciplinary Procedures

Ballymahon Vocational School will endeavour to ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. Sanctions and rewards are necessary to ensure that the school rules are adhered to, thereby creating a safe, positive environment for both teaching and learning. Positive behaviour is actively encouraged, and sanctions and rewards will be used to support this learning process. Sanctions will be appropriate to the age, developmental stage and with regard to the cultural background of the student. The significance of communication is recognised as is the importance of parental support for maintaining positive student behaviour.

Serious breaches of discipline may bypass some or all of these steps.

- **Step 1** Behaviour is recorded by class teachers for breach of school rules and students may receive a teacher-imposed sanction, e.g. extra work, cleaning duty, litter duty. After the third occasion of minor behavioural disturbance the student's behaviour will be recorded on VSWare. Parental access is granted on our VSWare system. A Parental Advisory Letter may be issued by the teacher at this stage or indeed at any stage leading up to this.
- **Step 2** After a third negative comment is recorded the Year Head will speak with the student. Parents/guardians may also be informed.
- **Step 3** If the issue persists, the Year Head contacts parents/guardians informing them of the situation. Student meets with further intervention if necessary, to include referral to Guidance Counsellor and/or School Completion. If student continues to receive records of behavioural issues, he/she is put on Report.
- The report card must be presented to the teacher at the beginning of the lesson and collected and signed by the teacher at the end of the lesson.
- The student will return the completed report card on a daily basis to either the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal at the end of each school day to be reviewed and signed. This report card will then be signed by the parent/guardian on completion.
- This support step is for a minimum of two weeks.
- **Step 4** If a student has attained 20 discipline points, student sits a detention. This will be a one-hour detention on a Friday afternoon from 1:20pm-2:30pm. The student will be issued with extra work. They will not be allowed complete homework or study during the period of this detention. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure their child's attendance, punctuality and also to ensure that their son/daughter is dropped off and picked up at the set times. **Failure to attend after-school detention will result in an automatic one-day suspension.**
- **Step 5** It is the policy of this school to have a Discipline Committee to help implement the code of discipline procedure. This is done through cooperation with ancillary staff, teachers, principal and board of management, under the guidelines laid down in the Code of Positive Behaviour. When it is deemed necessary by the Principal, a student will be brought before the Discipline Committee who will, as a body, impress upon the student, how unacceptable his/her misbehaviour is becoming and will encourage him/her to change his/her ways. Before a second report/detention

is issued the student will meet with members of the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee will outline what sanctions and/or punishments are deemed necessary, it will examine how effective they are, and it will have the power to amend various sanctions and/or punishments to improve the overall value of the Code of Positive Behaviour. It will do this in consultation with the Principal, staff and Board of Management. At all times there will be five members on the Discipline Committee, the Principal, the Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal I, an Assistant Principal II and another teacher. The parents/guardians may also be invited in for a meeting with this committee and/or the Year Head.

- It will remain at the discretion of the Discipline Committee/ Year Heads and Senior Management as to the appropriate consequence for a student's misbehaviour.
- If deemed serious enough, a student may be automatically placed on detention or report or to appear before the Discipline Committee. This shall remain at the discretion of the Year Heads and Senior Management.
- **Step 6** If the student has to be put back on report or continues to collect records of behavioural issues there will be a meeting arranged with some or all of the following: Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and a Parent/Guardian. The school may request the attendance of both parents/guardians. A student Behaviour Support plan will be mutually agreed by all parties. Each subject teacher will complete a full report on the student which will be discussed at the meeting. A possible outcome of this meeting may be the suspension of the student.
- **Step 7 Incidents of serious misconduct or misbehaviour may lead to suspension and/or exclusion. Please refer to the school's suspension and exclusion policy.**

I agree that the school rules are acceptable and will support the school in upholding the standards set therein:

Parent/Guardian's signature:

Date:

Emergency contact details:

Student's Signature:

Date:

Ladder of Referral

1. **Stage 1: Ladder of Intervention: Teachers** All Teachers are responsible for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and share, with other teachers a common responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds and on school outings. Teachers are encouraged to impose class sanctions before the recording of incidents on VS Ware. The Parental Advisory Letter may be used at any time before the third instance on VS Ware.

2. **Stage 2: Ladder of Intervention: Three instances of Misbehaviour recorded on VSWare referred to the Year Head** means that the matter is being brought to the attention of the Year Head. The Year Head meets with the student and/or parents/guardians where necessary and imposes an appropriate intervention/sanction. If a student is placed on detention and does not present for detention yet is present at school, then the Year Head refers the issue to the Deputy Principal/Principal who will sanction a suspension.

3. **Stage 3: Ladder of Intervention: Deputy Principal** The Deputy Principal as the primary overseer of discipline in the school, may at any time impose any of the sanctions mentioned in the above Stages and may advise the Year Head to impose certain sanctions and if consulted give direction in relation to procedures. One additional sanction the Deputy Principal may impose is the withdrawal from class for introspection and reflection for a brief period of time and the Deputy Principal may instruct or consult with the Year Head on its implementation. **NOTE: Teachers may never exclude a student from their classes and/or leave the student unsupervised as this is a breach of Health and Safety.**

4. **Stage 4: Ladder of Intervention: Principal** The Principal has final responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. He or she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate. The Principal is the last voice of reason regarding a fair process that begins in the classroom. All measures must be exhausted and deemed to be so by the Deputy Principal before a referral is brought to the Principal or if a single incident is considered by the Deputy Principal after being consulted by the Year Head to be so serious that the Principal's attention is sought straight away. The Deputy Principal only will determine if this is the route to take. It must be noted, however, that this will be a **seldom occurrence** and that all administrative aspects of the Code's implementation must still be expected to be followed through before the Principal makes a decision regarding the situation

5. **Stage 5: Ladder of Intervention: Suspension and/or Exclusion**
Suspension or Exclusion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The exclusion of a student is a very serious step, and one that is only taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. At this stage the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid exclusion of the student, however, it may be necessary if the School Authorities have tried a series of interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, Section 29).