

St. Mary's Secondary School, Baldoye



Expulsion Policy

1. Definition

A student is permanently excluded from the school.

Authority to expel

The Board of Management of St Mary's Secondary School has the authority to expel.

2. The Grounds for the Expulsion

2.1 Expulsion of a student is the ultimate step and will only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. It will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

2.2 Normally, the school will have taken significant steps to address the behaviour and to avoid expulsion, such as:

- Meeting with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to improve her behaviour
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of her behaviour, if it should persist
- Utilising the sanctions in the School Code of Behaviour
- Offering counselling to the student
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies where appropriate

2.3 The school will have reviewed the reason why these have not worked. The decision 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 significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

2.4 The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

3. Expulsion for a First Offence

3.1 The Board of Management may form the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in such an expulsion include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence, physical or sexual assault
- Possession of a weapon
- Having on her person, to use or misuse, any illegal substances, mind altering substances or any other substances deemed by the Board of Management to be inappropriate on school premises.

3.2 **Substances deemed inappropriate include:**

- Any product available to purchase from head shops or similar type shops
- Any illegal substances for sale or supply
- Solvents
- Alcohol

3.3 **Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student**

A number of factors will be considered before deciding to expel a student:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

4. Procedures in respect of expulsion

4.1 Step 1: Detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, the Principal will:

Inform the student of the alleged misbehaviour, hear the student's viewpoint, and explain how the allegation is being investigated and that it could result in expulsion.

Inform the parents/guardians by phone (if possible), and by letter of the following:

- The alleged misbehaviour
- How it is being investigated
- That it could result in expulsion
- Invite the parents/guardians and their son/daughter into the school for a meeting.

4.2 Step 2: Meeting between Parents/Guardians, Student, Principal and Deputy Principal/Year Head

If parents/guardians and the student fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will phone (if possible) and write to them, advising them of the gravity of the matter and the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting, and failing that, the duty of the school to proceed to the Board of Management for a decision on the matter.

At the meeting, the Principal and Deputy Principal will outline the results of the investigation of serious misbehaviour. The Principal will indicate that he/she intends bringing the student to the Board of Management and that it could result in expulsion. The student and parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to give their side of the story, to ask questions about the evidence and to make their case for lessening the sanction if they so wish.

If the Principal decides that the behaviour still warrants going to the Board of Management, he/she will inform the parents/guardians of his/ her intention.

4.3 Step 3: The Principal will write to the parents/guardians of the student:

- She/he will notify the parents/guardians and the student herself (if eighteen years or over) of the date of the Special Meeting of the Board of Management and invite them all to attend
- She/he will outline the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion
- She/he will ensure the parents/guardians have comprehensive records of the

- allegations against the student, and an outline of the investigation
- She/he will enclose a copy of the School's Policy on Expulsion
- She/he will ask them to confirm by phone that they can attend.

The parents/guardians will have at least two days from the arrival of the letter, to the Board of Management meeting.

4.4 Step 4: Special Board of Management Meeting

Prior to the Special Board Meeting, the Principal will provide to each Board member comprehensive records of the allegations against the student, and an outline of the investigation

Board members only

- The Board must ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student.
- The Board will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.
- The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case.
- The Board will ensure that no party that has any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

Actual hearing:

- The Principal and the parents/guardians, (or the student if aged eighteen years or over), put their cases to the Board in each other's presence
- Each party is allowed to question the evidence of the other party
- The Board is allowed to question parents/guardians, student, Principal
- The Principal makes his/her recommendation to the Board
- Parents/Guardians may use the opportunity to make their case for lessening the sanction

Decision making

- Parents/guardians, student and Principal leave the meeting.
- The Board deliberates.

4.5 Step 5: Board is of the opinion to expel

If the Board comes to the conclusion, that it is of the opinion, that the student should be expelled it does the following:

- It informs the parents/guardians by phone (if possible)
- It writes to the parents/guardians informing them of its opinion to expel and its reason(s)
- It explains their right to appeal (or the student herself if eighteen years or over) under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998
- It encloses a copy of the relevant section of the Education Act
- It encloses a form for the appeal
- It explains that the Education Welfare Officer will be informed promptly in writing as to the opinion of the Board that the student should be expelled, and the reason(s) for that opinion
- It explains that the student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer receives the written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 24 (1))

The Board has the right to suspend a student during this time. This will only be considered where there is likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

4.6 Step 6: Consultation arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

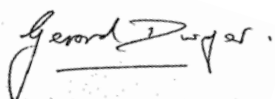
Within twenty days of receipt of notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must consult/and or meet with the student, parents/guardians, Principal and anyone else who may be of assistance, (Education (Welfare) Act, Section 24). The purpose of these consultations/meetings is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. In the interests of the student's educational welfare, the School will be involved in these consultations, to focus on alternative educational possibilities for the student.

4.7 Step 7: Expulsion

When the twenty day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where 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 has delegated this task to the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal). The parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed and reminded of their right (or the student herself if eighteen years or over) to appeal.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

Ratified: Board of Management ratified and reviewed 23 March 21



Chairperson:



Dr. E. Greene – Principal / Secretary to Board of Management

Date: 23/3/21