

Drumshanbo Vocational School

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB



Mission Statement

Drumshanbo Vocational School incorporating students, teachers, parents and community, seek to provide for the intellectual/curricular, physical, social and personal education of the student.

The school aims to establish, develop and nurture attitudes, values and behaviour which will enable the whole school community to reach its full potential.

All students are encouraged to find their own strengths in order to grow into self-confident and responsible adults. Within a firmly established program of pastoral care, we seek to enhance the spiritual aspects of our students' lives.

Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy

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Admission to Drumshanbo Vocational School implies acceptance of the rules and policies of that school.

These rules and the code of behaviour were formulated to ensure that every student of Drumshanbo Vocational School can become a responsible person aware of his/her dignity and worth. By adhering to the rules and code of behaviour, a friendly environment can be maintained where all can work, study and inter-relate in a positive way in pleasant and safe surroundings. This code of behaviour applies to the students in all years up to and including Leaving Certificate. It relates to all school organised activities, both during and outside of school hours. School policy documents associated with these regulations may be obtained from the school.

1 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY (See Attendance Policy)

- a. Students are expected to attend on time for class or any form of school activity.
- b. Lockers/toilets may not normally be accessed between or during classes unless permission has been given by class teacher; students should collect all necessary books from the lockers before first class and during morning and lunch time breaks.
- c. Students are not allowed to leave school grounds during school hours (except main lunch break) without the permission of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or Teacher-in-charge. Students will be allowed to leave the school for the main lunch break provided they have consent of their Parents/Guardians and have filled in the School Indemnity Form.
- d. All absences must be explained by a note from Parents/Guardians in the Student Journal (in advance where possible). Absence slips for this purpose are contained in the back of the Journal.

2 STUDY/HOMEWORK (See Homework Policy)

- a. Students are expected to be fully prepared for class each day. This entails having the proper books, materials etc., for each class.
- b. After each class, the student automatically has study to do. This involves reviewing the topics covered in class, revising previous work and preparing for the next class. Written homework is additional to this normal study.
- c. Students absent from class due to involvement in sports or extra-curricular activity should make a reasonable effort to complete the homework given in that class.

3 COURTESY & RESPECT

- a. Students will show due respect and consideration to everybody in the school, on the way to and from school, on school trips and while representing the school in any way. Furthermore, students will not be engaged in any type of bullying or abusive behaviour of each other or of any of the school community at any time – including outside of school hours. (See anti-bullying policy)
- b. Everybody has a right to learn and therefore no student will be disruptive in class and will not mock or jeer others. (See anti-bullying policy)
- c. Students are not normally permitted to have mobile phones or other personal electronic equipment in the classroom. Any mobile phones, ipods and other personal electronic music players must be kept switched off and in the student's locker during class times. The school will not be responsible for the safe-keeping of these devices. These items may be confiscated by staff and returned in accordance with school policy. (See policy on Personal Electronic Equipment)

4 HEALTH & SAFETY

- a. **Smoking:** Smoking seriously damages health so we urge all students not to smoke at all. Smoking in any part of the school grounds or vicinity is forbidden and is also **illegal**.
- b. **Substance abuse:** It is absolutely forbidden to be under the influence of, or in possession of, alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. (See Substance Use Policy)
- c. When in the school, everybody should walk, not run. Care should be taken not to push or jostle others. Keep to your right in corridors and on the stairs and do not block fire exits.
- d. Students are expected to observe the safety rules of the computer room (See Internet Use Policy) and other specialist rooms.
- e. No jewellery is permitted other a watch and one pair of stud (or very small) earrings.
- f. Students must not bring anything to school that is proscribed or could endanger themselves or others (eg: bangers, lasers, knives etc).
- g. Students are requested to pay attention to any health & safety notices posted up around the school and to have regard for their own safety and the safety of others at all times.
- h. Eating or drinking is not allowed in class.
- i. Students are expected to have regard for their safety and the safety of others on way to and from school and when outside school at break time and waiting for bus. Walk on the footpaths only.

5 SCHOOL UNIFORM (See school uniform policy)

- a. Full school uniform must be worn during school hours.
- b. Students are expected to have rain gear for wet days.
- c. Jackets/hats/scarves may not be worn in class unless permission has been granted by the teacher.

- d. Appropriate gear must be worn for PE & training (as instructed by the PE/Games teachers).
- e. See 4(e) re. jewellery.

6 CARE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

We all expect to work and study in a pleasant environment, free from litter, graffiti and damaged property. All of us share a responsibility for maintaining a clean healthy environment. Food and drink should only be consumed at break times, in the rooms allocated to each class.

- a. **Chewing gum:** Not allowed in school (except for verified medical reasons).
- b. **Tippex** or any type of liquid eraser: Use confined to senior students only (post Junior Cert).
- c. **Litter:** Everyone is responsible for cleaning up his/her own litter and using the bins provided.
- d. All must respect school property and the property of others. Graffiti will not be tolerated. School books must be covered.

7 STUDENT JOURNAL

- a. The Student Journal is an important means of communication between parents/guardians, students and the school. It serves as:
 - (i) A written record of all homework
 - (ii) A record of important school events
 - (iii) A means of communication between teacher and parents/guardians.

Students are requested to make the journal available to a member of staff on request, to keep it in good order and to get it signed by parent/guardian at the weekend. Mislaid journals must be replaced within one week. Replacement journals must be purchased from the school.

DISCIPLINE STRUCTURE & SANCTIONS

The school discipline policy is based on the principles of natural justice, including the right of the majority in a class to education/instruction without interference. The student will receive a fair hearing at each stage of the disciplinary process. Our discipline policy is primarily preventative and secondarily corrective.

Each year group has a teacher assigned as **Year Head**. The Year Head oversees the welfare of the group. However, this pastoral care role and maintaining good standards of discipline are not mutually exclusive so the Year Head also plays a key role in administration of the Code of Behaviour.

For serious misdemeanours, a teacher will submit a **Complaint Form** to the Year Head who may in turn refer the matter to the Principal or the Dean of Discipline. Incidents of bullying are dealt with under the school Anti-Bullying Policy.

Other breaches of school discipline are recorded by school staff in the Student Journal. Three such signatures in a week/seven in a calendar month may result in the student being put on **Year Head's Report Card (White Card)** and the parents being notified. If the behaviour does not improve the student may go on to the Report Card of the **Dean of Discipline (Yellow Card)** and **Principal's Report Card (Red Card)** if necessary. See Report Card referral structure.

Following the Principal's Report Card, or earlier if deemed necessary, the Principal or in his/her absence, the Deputy Principal, may impose a suspension for up to 3 days. The matter will be referred to the Board of Management for longer suspensions (more than 3 school days) or expulsion from the school (Please see the School Policy on Suspensions & Expulsions). The school will make every effort to prevent the behaviour problem from reaching this conclusion. This will entail:

- Maintaining regular contact with the parents/guardians
- Seeking to establish the reason(s) for the misbehaviour
- Choosing sanctions that are appropriate to the misbehaviour
- Allowing the student ample opportunity to change the behaviour, bearing in mind the rights of the majority in the class to learn.

- Referring the matter to the School Pastoral Care & Student Support Team if appropriate
- Availing of the services of the National Educational Psychological Services, the HSE, or other outside agencies if deemed necessary, with parental consent.

There are **specific sanctions** for certain forms of misbehaviour, mainly because they are considered serious and/or impinge on the rights of others:-

- Bullying of any form or abusive behaviour, either physical or verbal may result in a suspension and/or a Principal's Report Form. Outside agencies may need to be involved. (See Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Possession of alcohol/illegal substances or items either in school or on school organised activities will result in suspension and/or any other sanction deemed appropriate by the Board of Management.
- Smoking in the school grounds will result in the first instance in a Report Form and parental notification. Suspension may also be imposed.
- Deliberate damage to school property or the property of others: in addition to this being a serious disciplinary issue, the student will be expected to make good any damage caused.
- Littering the school environs or chewing gum: In the first instance this will result in a signature in the journal and/or taking part in the next litter clean-up. Repeat offences will result in further sanctions.
- An immediate suspension may be imposed where the continued presence of the student in the school is deemed by the Principal/ Deputy Principal to put others at risk.

Behaviour likely to result in the student not achieving his/her potential will have specific sanctions imposed as follows:

- Late for class, homework incomplete, no books without satisfactory explanation will normally be dealt with by the class teacher, who may give a signature and/or assign work for the student to do during detention the following day.
- Mitching from school/class or leaving the school grounds at any time without permission: Principal's Report Form (may be issued by the Attendance Officer). The school is obliged to report on these absences to the National Education Welfare Board.

Written records of behaviour are kept throughout a student's school career.

A decision taken to expel or suspend a student may be appealed under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Details can be obtained from the School Principal. ETB Appeal Form also available on the school website and from ETB Head Office, Castlebar, Co Mayo.

REWARDS AND COMMENDATION FOR GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Students at Drumshanbo Vocational School have an excellent reputation for good behaviour and involvement in sports & extra-curricular activities. This will continue to be acknowledged as often as possible by staff. This acknowledgement may take the form of:

- Verbal praise
- Note of affirmation in student journal or on end of term report. *(While good behaviour is expected from everybody, a teacher may give a written commendation in the journal for those students who make that extra effort)*
- Positive letter or phone call home
- Display of work/photos in school and on school web-site
- Class rewards such as outings
- School Prize-giving Ceremony

End of Year Awards Ceremony – students will be given recognition for:

- Outstanding achievements
- Outstanding academic achievements
- Extra-curricular accomplishments
- Sporting achievements
- Personal accomplishments

AGREEMENT

The school discipline policy is based on the principles of natural justice, including the right of the majority in a class to education/instruction without interference. Disciplinary policy is primarily preventative and secondarily corrective. The successful education of all pupils depends on an active partnership between pupils, parents/guardians and the school. Each partner has rights, responsibilities and expectations.

Drumshanbo Vocational School agrees to meet the expectations of parents and pupils by providing:

- An education based on high expectations
- A broad and balanced education
- A high standard of teaching, academic support and guidance
- A secure, healthy and well disciplined environment
- Written reports home twice each year
- A Parent/Teacher meeting once a year
- The chance to participate in a variety of activities outside of the classroom
- A respect for all pupils

Signature of Principal _____

As a pupil of Drumshanbo Vocational School, I agree to meet the expectations of my parents and the school by:

- Attending school regularly and being punctual at all times
- Treating all members of the school community with respect
- Working hard to meet all course requirements
- Completing homework on time
- Keeping to the school rules and behaving in a responsible way, both in school and when travelling to and from school by public transport
- Sharing responsibility for the school environment
- Wearing full school uniform

- Refraining from involvement in bullying behaviour
- Producing the school journal when requested to do so by a member of staff
- Asking my parent(s)/guardians to sign the school journal

Signature of Student: _____

As parent(s)/guardians I/we agree to meet the expectations of my/our child and the school by:

- Ensuring excellent attendance and informing the school about any reason for absence
- Encouraging and supporting my/our child with school work
- Ensuring that my child is in possession of all necessary equipment at the beginning of the school year
- Supporting the policies of the school
- Attending parent/teacher meetings and any special school appointment where possible
- Checking and signing the student journal as requested.

Signed: _____ Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The school management reserves the right to amend or add to the rules above during the school year if it is in the interest of the health & safety of the students or staff.

Code of Behaviour – Discipline Policy

Suspensions and Expulsions

Suspension is defined as requiring a student to be absent from school for a specified period of school days.

The Board of Management of DVS formally delegated the authority to suspend a student (for up to and including 3 school days) to the Principal – or Deputy Principal, where the Principal is not available.

A range of interventions and supports will normally have been tried before a student is suspended.

The grounds for a suspension:

- Where the student's presence is having a detrimental effect on the learning of other students
- Where the student's continued presence is a threat to the safety of him/herself or others
- As a result of deliberate damage to school property or the property of others
- Bullying or intimidation of any member of the school community including the verbal or physical (actual or threatened) assault on a member of staff
- The use of or possession of illicit drugs (including alcohol or cigarettes)

Rationale for Suspension

It gives the student a chance to reflect on his/her actions and it gives school management a chance to develop a strategy to improve the behaviour. Suspension may be necessary for the safety of the student or others as a result of the behaviour of the offending student.

Types of suspension

1. Usually all of the interventions and supports available will have been tried and the suspension will be the ultimate sanction after the steps on the report card system have been exhausted.

2. Immediate suspension can be imposed as a result of very serious misbehaviour – for example: where the student has threatened or assaulted somebody or where that student’s continued presence in the school is likely to present a real threat to himself or others.

Procedures for a suspension:

- Parent(s) will be notified in writing or by phone (in the case of immediate suspension), informing them of the reason and duration of the suspension. The parent may discuss the decision with the principal by meeting him/her or a person delegated by him/her.
- Parents may appeal the decision to suspend to the Board of Management where they may present a case to the Board.
- If the B.O.M. upholds the decision to suspend, the parents may appeal the decision to a sub-committee of the Mayo Sligo and Leitrim Education & Training Board (ETB) within seven days of the notification of the decision of the B.O.M. ETB Appeal Form available from the school and on the school website.
- In the case of the overturning of an immediate suspension – the suspension will be removed from the student’s record.

In accordance with the NEWB Guidelines, students will not normally be suspended for poor academic performance, poor attendance, poor punctuality or minor breaches of the school Code of Behaviour.