



Ballinode Community College

Code of Behaviour

Ethos Statement

Ballinode Community College is a constituent college of Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim Education & Training Board.

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB is a community of learners with an historic and unique tradition as a provider of education and training. In responding to the needs of the community it delivers the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB Colleges, Schools and Centres of Education are State, co-educational and multi-denominational in character where policies, practices and attitudes are underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.

The Board of Management of Ballinode Community College is publishing this document as the official Code of Behaviour. The ETB as patron of the school has approved this publication. Copies of the policy are available at the school and on the school website. Copies are also furnished to each person who applies to be admitted to the school.

Mission Statement

Our College provides a safe healthy environment in which all students are nurtured and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

The Code of Behaviour helps to set the standards that the school community aspires to and acts as a template which allows students and staff to work together to continue to develop the school and maintain its characteristic vision.

Aims

1. To develop a moral framework within which initiative, responsibility and healthy relationships can flourish.
2. To enable students to develop a sense of self-worth and a respect and tolerance for others.
3. To produce an environment in which students feel safe, secure and respected.
4. To encourage positive, cooperative and creative behaviours.

Objectives

To assist students in developing:

- Self-confidence
- self-control
- sensitivity and consideration for others
- pride in themselves and their school (e.g. always wearing and displaying the school uniform)
- an interest in their activities
- responsibility for their learning and their environment
- an independence of mind
- a sense of fairness
- an understanding of the need for rules
- non-sexist attitudes
- non-racist attitudes
- a resilient approach to tasks
- an appropriate response to bullying and abuse
- an inclusive attitude

A Positive Focus

In conjunction with wellbeing, students' achievements, academic or otherwise, will be recognised within the school, through class tutor meetings, and in school publications.

The following measures are taken:

- A student of the month is announced for each class group each month and positive behaviour is incentivised. Rewards are accessible to all students.
- Encouraging students by granting additional responsibilities and by allowing students to involve themselves in the development of the code of behaviour and all school activities.

- Public acknowledgement from staff of positive behaviour through *vs ware* and student events as well as praise and encouragement from staff.
- Examples of students' work and achievements are displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.

Students in Ballinode Community College are encouraged to make a positive impact in the school community by displaying positive behaviour and implementing the core values of our positive behaviour matrix (see Appendix 1). The core expectations we have for all students are:

1. Be Ready to learn in every class, every day
2. Be Respectful to all members of the school community
3. Be Responsible for their own learning and actions.

Students are expected to abide by the expectations drawn up for classrooms and other specific areas.

Code of Expected Conduct

- Treat everyone at school with care and respect: this includes fellow students, teachers, support staff, and all who visit the school
- Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is expected. For every absence, students must provide a written explanation from a parent or guardian.
- Students must remain on the school grounds unless permission to leave is granted by a parent and approved by school management.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in an attentive, courteous and studious manner, and to maintain an acceptable standard of personal hygiene.
- School uniform needs to be worn at all times.
- The school journal is an essential part of school equipment. All students must bring their journal to school every day. It is to be used to record homework, and notes from parents and teachers only.
- The use of mobile phones, air pods/ear buds are prohibited in class, and will result in the items being confiscated. Inappropriate use of phones is prohibited at all times. Ballinode Community College is a Phone Free Zone.
- Inappropriate use of the internet is forbidden (please see Acceptable Usage Policy).
- I Pads need to be in school at all times. Inappropriate use of student iPad is forbidden (please see iPad policy).
- Eating and drinking is confined to the canteen, and at break times only.

- Any student found in possession of alcohol, other non-prescribed drugs or controlled substances, either on the school premises or during any school related activity will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including the possibility of suspension and exclusion.
- Smoking/vaping on the school campus is prohibited.

Care of School Premises

Everyone in the school is responsible for the care of the school premises.

Students and staff are encouraged to feel a sense of ownership of the school and its environment.

- Staff will display students' work
- The building will be kept clean and tidy
- The grounds will be kept free of litter
- Damage or defacing school building and property is prohibited.

Positive Behaviour Matrix:

All members of the school community have Rights and Responsibilities, which the Positive Behaviour Matrix seeks to embed. The matrix is made up of six core areas of expected behaviour, in addition to the code of conduct outlined above. The behaviour matrix is displayed around the school and taught and discussed with each class at the beginning of each school year and again throughout the school year. Our core values and clear expectations ensure that our school is a happy and safe place for all members of our school community. (please see Appendix 1).

Behaviour Expectations:

1. Classrooms	
Be Ready	Line up outside classes and wait. Have all class materials ready and iPad fully charged. Follow class seating plan
Be Respectful	One voice. Hands up. Listen to others. Allow everyone to learn
Be Responsible	Leave classroom as you found it. Be on time. Work to your best ability.

2. Corridors	
Be Ready	Move quickly and quietly to your next class. Visit lockers before/after school, or during breaks only.
Be Respectful	Greet others appropriately. Stay in designated areas at breaks.
Be Responsible	Ensure corridors are safe spaces. Respect personal space. Keep corridors tidy.

3. Canteen (and lunch rooms)	
Be Ready	Join the end of the queue. Keep queue moving. Leave bags in designated areas.
Be Respectful	Keep your place in the queue. Use indoor voice level in canteen. Be polite to all staff.
Be Responsible	Be patient. Use Bins – Tidy up. Return items to canteen. Fill water bottles at break times only.

4. Toilets	
Be Ready	Line up outside at break times and wait your turn. Get journal signed by teacher before leaving class.
Be Respectful	Keep toilets clean and tidy – leave them as you would like to find them. Respect others' privacy
Be Responsible	Use during break. Report any issues to staff. Wash your hands!

5. Outside (and play areas)	
Be Ready	Stay within designated areas. Follow staff instructions.
Be Respectful	Use positive and respectful language. Use bins for rubbish – keep our school grounds tidy.
Be Responsible	Collect and return equipment at end of breaks. Report any issues. Enter and exit the building in an orderly manner

6.All Locations (including online)	
Be Ready	Use good manners. Ask for help if needed. Our school is a phone free zone.
Be Respectful	Wear required school uniform. Look after school and others' property. Be inclusive.
Be Responsible	Make our school proud - behave responsibly. Use iPads/internet as a learning resource. Protect personal information online

Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Disrespect, disobedience, defiant attitude towards teachers and other staff
- Abusive, insulting or sexual remarks made to or about staff or other students
- Bullying, intimidating or threatening staff or other students
- Racist/offensive remarks
- Gender based abuse
- Disruption of classes through talking, shouting, leaving assigned seat, refusal to follow instructions, etc.
- Late-coming and skipping classes
- Damage to school property or property of other students or staff
- Possession of knives, dangerous implements, fireworks, sprays, etc.
- Smoking/vaping, spitting, chewing gum
- Eating or drinking in building other than in the canteen
- Littering inside or outside school
- Not wearing and displaying full school uniform
- Failure to have all necessary books, copies, pens, pencils and equipment including ipads.
- Not doing required class work and homework
- Accessing ATU grounds and premises.
- Leaving school grounds during school day without prior written permission from parents/guardians and school management.
- Any behaviour which impacts adversely or is damaging to the reputation of the College.

Sanctions

Positive behaviours are encouraged and nurtured at all times in Ballinode Community College. A reprimand from a member of staff is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour. However, if this fails to correct the behaviour of a student the following procedures may be adopted:

- Moving the student to a different place
- Moving the student to another classroom
- Lunchtime detention
- Exclusion from school outings and tours
- Exclusion from the right to represent the school (for example sports, etc.)
- A meeting with a senior member of staff-Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head.
- Letter/ phone-call to parent/guardian
- Parent/guardian called to school to discuss behaviour problems
- Detention during lunchtime (notification to parent/guardian)
- Suspension from school for a stated period
- Reduced hours in school
- In the case of wilful or careless damage to property, students will have to pay for repair or replacement.
- Exclusion from school
- Any other sanction that is deemed appropriate by the Principal or the Board of Management

Referral System

The school operates a referral system to address incidents of repeated misbehavior:

1. In cases where there is repeated misbehaviour in class and interventions have been tried by the subject teacher, a referral form will be completed by the subject teacher and passed on to the year head. The year head will discuss the issue with the student in question. A warning will be issued as to future behaviour.
2. Where students receive a second referral they will be placed on lunchtime detention. Parents / guardians will be notified of this by letter.
3. Upon receipt of a third referral, the Deputy principal will place the student in question *on report* so that behaviour can be monitored. The student will carry a report card to class each day for a week. Teachers will sign the card at the end of each class and the card will be signed by parents each evening. At the end of each day the completed card will be handed to the Deputy Principal. In addition, students will again be placed on lunchtime detention. Parents / guardians will be notified of this by letter.

4. In instances where students receive a fourth referral, or subsequent referrals, parents / guardians will be invited to the school for a meeting to discuss the issues in question and to decide how best to address them.
5. The Senior Management team will meet to discuss actions required, which may include suspension.

Promoting good behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of this code. Positive behaviour will be encouraged by:

- Student of the Month awards
- Praise from staff
- Encouraging students by granting additional responsibilities and by allowing students to involve themselves in the development of the code of behaviour
- Acknowledging students achievements at all levels
- Public acknowledgement from staff of positive behaviour through *vs ware* and student events

Parents/Guardians

Ballinode Community College acknowledges the primary responsibility of parents/guardians for their children, and seeks to assist them by creating a healthy and safe environment in the school so that students may thrive and work to achieve their potential.

Parents have a vital role in promoting good behaviour in school. Therefore effective home/school liaison is very important. The school has a right to expect that parents will give their full support in dealing with their child's behaviour.

We expect parents/guardians to:

- Keep us informed of behavioural difficulties they may be experiencing at home
- Inform us of any trauma which may affect their child's performance or behaviour at school
- Inform us about their child's ill-health and any absences caused by it

The school will endeavour to achieve good home/school liaison by:

- Promoting a welcoming environment in the school
- Giving parents/guardians regular constructive comments on students' work and behaviour

- Encouraging parents/guardians to join parents' association and come to parent/teacher meetings and other events in the school
- Involve parents/guardians early in any disciplinary matter

Other Agencies

Full use will be made of such agencies as Education Welfare Officers, Home/School Liaison Officers, Social Services, Health Services, School Completion Programme. and the Educational Psychological Services where appropriate.

Links to other Policies

Parents and students are advised that school policies on Admissions, Anti-Bullying, Anti-Racism, Bi-Cinealta, Ipad, Homework, Mobile phone, Uniform, School Tour, Substance Abuse, Acceptable Usage Policy, etc. are an essential aspect of the Code of Behaviour.

Suspensions

The Board of Management has delegated authority to the Principal of the College to suspend for a period of up to 3 days. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal a suspension imposed by the Principal to the Board of Management.

Suspension Procedures

Where there is serious misbehaviour which may warrant suspension the College will:

1. Inform the student and their parents/guardians about the complaint/incident.
2. Afford parents/guardians and the student an opportunity to respond. Normally this will involve a meeting between the parties.
3. Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or visitors, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension parents/guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
4. Where the Board of Management considers imposing a suspension the parents/guardians of the student will be afforded the opportunity to appeal to the Board of Management.

At the end of a suspension the student will not be allowed back to school unless he/she is accompanied by at least one parent/guardian to discuss his/her reintegration back into the school and to sign a Behaviour Contract

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents/guardians or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. At the time when parents/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension they and the student will be told about their right to appeal. The appeal is made in the first instance to the ETB. Where an appeal to the ETB is concluded, parents/guardians or a student over 18 years may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal will notify the parents/guardians 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
- Any study programme to be followed. Work will be allocated for the student on Teams.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. Prior to a decision to expel, the College will make every effort to address the misbehaviour by

- Meeting with parent/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour if it should persist
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion 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 includes

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

Procedures in respect of expulsion

For an expulsion to take place

Step 1:

The Principal will:

- Inform the student and their parents/guardians in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it was investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give parents/guardians and the student every opportunity to respond (including meetings) to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Parents should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour. Parents and the student must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents is essential. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal to expel a student.

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

The Principal should:

- Inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Ensure that parents/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the Board of Management with the same records as are given to the parents/guardian
- Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to the hearing
- Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

The Board of Management 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. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student it will hold a hearing. At the hearing the Principal, parents/guardians or a student aged over 18 years, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for the lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that 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.

After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- Where 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 Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The Board of Management should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date of which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).
- An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, s4A).
- The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

- Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled the EWO will make all reasonable efforts to hold individual meeting with the Principal, parents/guardians, the student and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- The EWO will convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.
- The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education. Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)).

- A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a 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.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel.

- Where the twenty-day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board should formally confirm the decision to expel.
- Parents/guardians and the student will be notified immediately that the expulsion will proceed.
- Parents/guardians and the student will be informed of the right to appeal and be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

Step 7: Appeal

- The appeal will be made in the first instance to the ETB. Where an appeal to the ETB has been concluded a further appeal (if necessary) may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

N.B. By enrolling their child in this school, parents/guardians are acknowledging acceptance and support for the Code of Behaviour.

This policy was formulated in 2012

Reviewed: June 20th, 2017

Most recent review: February 2026

Next Review date: June, 2028

Appendix 1: Positive Behaviour Matrix

 <h1 style="text-align: center;">Nurture and Encourage</h1>						
	Classrooms	Corridors	Canteen (lunch rooms)	Toilets	Outside (play areas)	All Locations (incl. Online)
Be Ready	Line up outside classes and wait. Have all class materials ready and iPad fully charged. Follow class seating plan.	Move quickly and quietly to your next class. Visit lockers before/after school, or during breaks only.	Join the end of the queue. Keep queue moving. Leave bags in designated areas.	Line up outside at break times and wait your turn. Get Journal signed by teacher before leaving class.	Stay within designated areas. Follow staff instructions.	Use good manners. Ask for help if needed. Our school is a phone free zone.
Be Respectful	One voice. Hands up. Listen to others. Allow everyone to learn.	Greet others appropriately. Stay in designated areas at breaks.	Keep your place in the queue. Use indoor voice level in canteen. Be polite to all staff.	Keep toilets clean and tidy – leave them as you would like to find them. Respect others' privacy.	Use positive and respectful language. Use bins for rubbish – keep our school grounds tidy.	Wear required school uniform. Look after school and others' property. Be inclusive.
Be Responsible	Leave classroom as you found it. Be on time. Work to your best ability.	Ensure corridors are safe spaces. Respect personal space. Keep corridors tidy.	Be patient. Use Bins – Tidy up. Return items to canteen. Fill water bottles at break times only.	Use during break. Report any issues to staff. Wash your hands!	Collect and return equipment at end of breaks. Report any issues.	Make our school proud - behave responsibly. Use iPads/Internet as a learning resource. Protect personal information online.