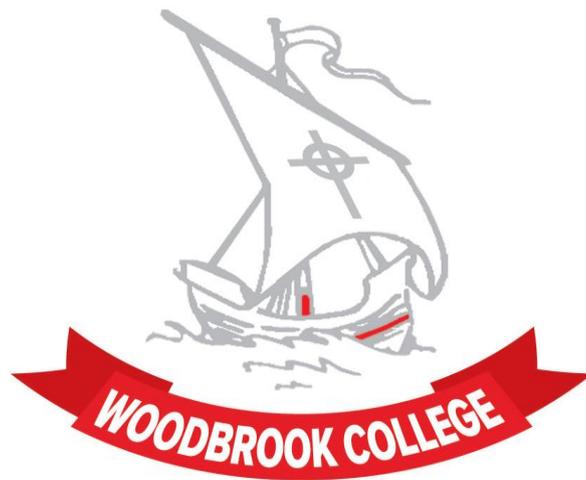


# Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow



## Suspension and Expulsion Policy

*"Learning together for a better future"*

## 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Woodbrook has a Christian tradition reflecting its origin within Edmund Rice School's Trusts' (ERST) history.
- 1.2 Woodbrook considers itself a pluralist community; it embraces inclusion in terms of social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity.
- 1.3 Woodbrook is a co-educational school with a broad curriculum, which aims to meet the diverse range of academic, vocational, spiritual and social needs of its students.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Woodbrook believes that it is important to ensure that everyone is familiar with the suspension and expulsion process. The details of which are outlined below. We also acknowledge access to education shapes the life chances of our students in a fundamental way. For this reason, a proposal to exclude a student, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step warranted only by very serious or continuous misbehaviour.
- 2.2 The aims of this policy are:
  - To give clarity to all regarding suspensions and exclusions from the school
  - To give parents and students information on how to appeal a decision
  - To show the extent to which the school considers the decision to suspend or exclude a student from Woodbrook College a serious matter.

## 3. SUSPENSION

- 3.1 The Right to be Heard: Before a suspension or other serious sanction is imposed, a student and their parents will be informed about the allegation/behaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter. They will also be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation before the sanction is imposed and make a case for lessening the punishment.
- 3.2 The Right to Impartiality in Decision Making: In the case of incidents where suspension may be used as a sanction, an impartial member of staff will carry out the investigation and make a full report of all the facts to the Principal or Deputy Principal. This person may also recommend an appropriate sanction. The Principal or Deputy Principal then makes a decision as to the appropriateness of the sanction. Only the Principal or Deputy Principal (as delegated by the BOM) can make a decision to suspend a student.
- 3.3 Grounds for Suspension: Suspensions are regarded as a very serious sanction reserved for very serious once-off offences or a combination of lesser though serious behavioural issues. Except in specific single incidents of serious misbehaviour (as stated in the Relationship and Behaviour Policy), other interventions will be tried before suspension and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.
  - The students behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
  - The students continued presence in school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
  - The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- 3.4 Part of a Behavioural Management Plan: Suspensions are not regarded as isolated events but as part of an overall behaviour management plan for the student in question. Therefore:
  - Suspensions will provide a respite for staff and student, to give the student a chance to reflect on the link between their actions and its consequences.
  - Suspensions will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
  - Suspensions will give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
  - Suspensions will impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour

- 3.5 Suspensions: As part of the school's policy on sanctions, particular named behaviours may incur a suspension as sanction. However this does not remove our duty to follow due processes and fair procedures in each case.
- 3.6 Immediate Suspensions: An immediate suspension will only be considered where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff in the school. Parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- 3.7 Rolling Suspension: A rolling suspension will only be used where the student, on their return to school, engages in further serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension.
- 3.8 Periods of Suspension: Students will always be suspended for a definite period which will be either:
- 1 to 4 Day
  - 5 Days after consultation with the Board of Management
  - 10 days in exceptional circumstances and after consultation with the Board of Management
- 3.9 Appeal: Parents/guardians may appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. Where a student is suspended for more than 20 days in a school year, the student/parents have a right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Details of how to appeal will be made available to parents/guardians by the school authorities.
- 3.10 Implementing the Suspension: Where it has been decided to suspend a student, the Principal or Deputy Principal will notify the parents by phone followed by an email, letter or other electronic method regarding:
- The period of the suspension and the start and end date
  - The reasons for the suspension
  - Any study programme to be followed
  - Arrangements for returning to school. This may include some or all of the following:
    - A requirement that the student reaffirms their commitment to the Relationship and Behaviour Policy and/or produces a letter of apology.
    - A meeting with a member of the school Guidance and Pastoral Care Team
    - A meeting between the parents, student and Year Head.
    - Any special pre-conditions for return such as external counselling, referral to N.E.P.S. etc.
  - Provision for appeal
- 3.11 Return from Suspension: When the student returns from suspension, they will be afforded the chance of a fresh start. As with all sanctions, once imposed and completed, the student will be given the opportunity to start again with a clean slate and treated the same as any other student.
- A Parent or guardian may be requested to attend with the student on the day of their return. Students who have been suspended may be re-admitted on a phased basis or a limited time-table, at the discretion of the School Authorities.
- 3.12 Reporting: A record of all suspensions will be maintained in the school. All suspensions will be noted at the next Board of Management meeting although the names of the students will not be disclosed. Students who have been suspended for more than six consecutive days will be notified to the relevant Education Welfare Officer. Students who are suspended for more than 20 days will be notified to the Education Welfare Board.
- 3.13 While on suspension, students are under parental care and supervision and must stay away from the school and its environs during the period of suspension and may not partake in curricular or extracurricular activities.

## 4. Expulsion

- 4.1 General: Expulsion (the permanent exclusion of a student) is an extremely serious sanction and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.2 A student may be expelled by the Board of Management if:
- All other sanctions have failed
  - Their behaviour places the safety of other member(s) of the school community at risk
  - Their behaviour is such that it interferes with the Constitutional right of other students to education
- 4.3 A period of suspension may precede a recommended expulsion and the parents/guardians will be informed of their right to present their case to the Board of Management and be given a chance to do so. The Education Welfare Board will be informed.
- 4.4 In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management having followed due processes and fair procedures, may form the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. This situation may arise should the student be found to have:
- Threatened violence against a member of staff or another student.
  - Engaged in physical violence/assault against a member of staff or another student.
  - Supplied illegal substances to others on the school premises.
  - Carried out a sexual assault.
  - Be in possession of a weapon of any kind on their person or their belongings, including their locker, which is perceived to cause harm.

**Please note that the above list is not exhaustive.**