



St. Peter's School Suspension Policy

Introductory Statement

All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it would be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved, where the sanction of suspension of a student/s is necessary for good governance.

Grounds for Suspension

When making a decision on a suspension the school considers that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. A range of appropriate student welfare and behavioural interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons as to why these have not worked. Suspension can give the student time to reflect on the link between his/her action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour, it can also provide a respite/break for both student and staff to allow the restoration of rapport and prevent further escalation or breakdown in the relationship. Any and all suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The decision to suspend a student is not taken lightly and requires serious grounds such as:

- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety of the student himself or herself, staff or other members of the school community.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- Behaviour noted in other policy documents including Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Mobile Phone, Bi Cinnealta, School Outings.

Note: A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

The following factors will be considered before a student is suspended; these factors are not exhaustive:

- The severity of the behaviour, its frequency, and the likelihood of reoccurrence.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The supports and interventions tried to date.
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of suspension.
- The age, comprehension and needs of the student.
- The student's previous record of behaviour at the school.
- Any mitigating circumstances.
- The degree to which parental, peer, or other pressure might have contributed to the behaviour.
- The extent to which the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the student and others in the school community.
- The degree to which the student recognises and accepts that their behaviour was unacceptable and is prepared to exhibit genuine contrition.

Procedures for Suspension

The Board of Management and Staff of St Peters School will follow the procedures listed below for suspension and expulsion outlined in the NEWB Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour.

1. The decision to suspend a student will be made by the principal and/or deputy principal in collaboration with the teacher and other relevant staff. Suspension will only be used when all other sanctions have failed. In all cases of suspension, the circumstances of the individual student and the possible effectiveness of the suspension will be taken into account. Parents/guardians will be informed, and, when stated, the student is not permitted to return to school until parents/guardians meet with the principal or relevant staff.

2. An incident report will be compiled by the staff involved and a copy given to the principal, who will forward one copy to the Chairperson of the Board of Management and a copy will be put on the student's file, and a copy made available to parent/guardian on request or at meeting on return.
3. The length of suspension will depend on the circumstances of the misconduct and will normally be for one day. However, if the seriousness of the situation demands, suspension may be extended to two or three days. In cases of extreme violent outbursts which clearly present a risk to the well-being of others the principal may approve an immediate suspension. This may require parents/guardians being asked to collect the student and remove them from the school premises on health and safety grounds.
4. The power to suspend a student for up to three days has been formally delegated to the School Principal by the Board of Management of St Peters School and that delegation is hereby confirmed. In some situations, a longer period of suspension may be deemed appropriate. In such cases the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

Following a suspension

Parents/guardians will be required to accompany the student on their return to school and attend a meeting with the principal and class teacher, as outlined in the Code of Behaviour. The principal must be satisfied that the student's return does not pose a risk to their own safety or that of other students or staff. If the Principal is not satisfied, the request for reinstatement may be referred to the Board of Management. Where reinstatement is approved, a revised SSP (Student Support Plan) must be in place before the student is formally readmitted to class.

Appealing a suspension

Parents who wish to appeal a decision of the school to suspend should discuss the matter with the school principal who will inform them of their rights. An appeal may be made by a parent/guardian if they consider that correct procedures have not been followed, or that an unfair decision has been made. An appeal should be made in writing stating the reason for the appeal. The decision of the principal to suspend a student may be appealed only to the Board of Management.

In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents/guardians have the right to appeal a suspension where the suspension, in any one school year, totals 20 days or more. Parents/guardians may appeal the suspension to the school's Board of Management. If the issue is not resolved at school level, a formal appeal can be made to the Department of Education and Youth within 42 calendar days of the decision.

Record and reporting of suspension

The principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension and also to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) as required. Under Section 21(4)(a) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the principal is required to notify the Educational Welfare Services when a student is suspended from school for 6 or more consecutive school days. Additionally, when the total number of suspension days in a school year reaches 20 or more, this must also be reported. This requirement is part of the effort to monitor student welfare and ensure schools are taking appropriate actions regarding student discipline and support. Formal written records will be kept of the decision, the rationale for the decision, the duration of the suspension any conditions attached to the suspension, and all communications to parents/guardians.

This policy has been drawn up by the principal in collaboration with the staff of St. Peter's and in consultation with the Board of Management. It will be made available to all members of the school community.

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended if necessary.



Signed:

Date: 8th October 2025

Ms Rosemary Fahy

PRINCIPAL



Signed:

Date: 8th October 2025

Mr Eoin Ó Donnagáin

CHAIRPERSON BOM