



TARBERT  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

*Code of Behaviour*

# CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

## INDEX

	PAGE
i. INTRODUCTION	3
a) The School Community	3
b) How we communicate: The Golden Rule	3
ii. ATTENDANCE	4
a) Legal Obligations	4
b) Recording Attendance	4
c) Attendance for House Exams & Class Tests	5
d) Lunch & Break Time	5
e) Leaving School before the end of the school day	6
f) Attendance at funerals connected to the school community	6
g) Student Drivers	7
h) Unauthorised Absences	7
iii. PUNCTUALITY	8
iv. GENERAL BEHAVIOUR	8
a) Classroom Rules	9
b) Implementing the Classroom Rules	10
v. GENERAL RULES	12
a) Bullying	12
b) Safety	12
c) Sexting	13
d) Health	13
e) Property	13
f) School Uniform	14
g) Hair Makeup & Jewellery	14
h) Implementing the General Rules	14

## i. Introduction

### a) The School Community

Our school is a community made up of students and their parents, teachers, secretaries, caretakers, cleaning staff, special needs assistants, student teachers and the Board of Management. This is a very large community and it can only function at its best when there is clear, regular and appropriate communication between all the different groups.

Our Code of Behaviour is designed to help everyone who is part of this school community to communicate and to work together to bring out the best in one another. The Code sets out the rules we have all agreed to so that everyone will know the correct procedures and the school will run smoothly. It gives the reasons for these rules and it also explains what the consequences are if these rules are ignored.

Our school crest is the lighthouse, in Irish a 'solas treorach' or guiding light. We want this Code to be a light to guide all of us and we want the principle of respect for one another to be at the heart of the Code and of everything we do in this school.

### b) How we communicate: the Golden Rule

We communicate with one another in many different ways; by speaking or gesturing, by writing or phoning, by texting or emailing, and we do so for many different reasons. We communicate in order to chat, to discuss, to inform, and to teach. Whatever the purpose is, in this school we will always try to communicate respect by the way we address one another, by the tone of voice we use, by the language we choose, by listening and by providing opportunities for everyone to have his or her voice heard. All the members of the school community have a responsibility to communicate with respect and courtesy. This is our Golden Rule.

## ii. Attendance

Studies show that school attendance is closely linked to achievement. The students who do well at school always have a good attendance record. We encourage good attendance in a number of ways:

- We emphasise to the student the importance of good attendance at our morning assemblies.
- There is an award for Junior Cert. and Leaving Cert. attendance at Awards Night each year.
- We reward good attendance at the end of First Year and Second Year.

### a) Legal Obligations

Please note that under the Education Welfare Act 2000 the school is legally obliged to keep a record of a student's attendance and absences, and also the reason for any absence. This relates both to absences for the entire day or part of the day only. The Education Welfare Act also obliges the school authorities to inform the Education Welfare Officer once a student who is under 16 years of age has accumulated 20 absences in any one year, this includes all absences whether due to illness or any other genuine reason.

For recording purposes, a student who goes home before 11.00am will be marked absent for the entire day.

### b) Recording Attendance

It is extremely important that student absences are recorded accurately. To help with this each home is provided with a booklet of absence slips, which a parent must fill in, sign and give to the student on the morning they are returning to school. The student will then put the slip in the absence box at the main office area. A student who does not bring an absence slip must report either to the Deputy Principal or Year Head before attending any class. Persistent "forgetting" of absence slips will result in lunch time detention.

### c) Attendance for House Exams and Class Tests

All teachers set class tests on a regular basis and we hold House Exams for

the whole school each term. These are to evaluate student progress, to determine subject levels (Higher, Ordinary) and to prepare students for the formal State Examinations.

Parents/Guardians are informed about in-house exams dates at the beginning of each academic year so as to ensure that every student is available for the full duration of his/her scheduled exams. Every effort will be made to accommodate any student who may miss an exam/part of the exams as a result of a bereavement or certified sickness but only within the duration of the in house exam dates themselves. In some situations parents may be asked to administer a missed exam in a controlled environment at home to their son/daughter. Unfortunately no exam can be administered to a student ahead of the scheduled exam date. Students who miss an exam or exams due to family holidays, sporting or cultural commitments such as concerts, weddings, etc. cannot be accommodated in this manner.

The timing of class tests is up to individual teachers and there is always the possibility that students who feel unprepared for these tests may try to avoid attendance on that particular day. If as a parent you are concerned that your student is using illness to avoid school you should contact the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Chaplain on the day in question in order to establish if there is something, test or otherwise, that is being avoided.

#### d) Lunch Time and Break Time

For supervision purposes, for insurance purposes and for the safety of all concerned, it is school policy that once students have arrived at school in the morning they do not leave the school grounds for any reason unless they have written permission from a parent and also have the permission of the Deputy Principal or Year Head. This applies to all students, including those who are repeating Leaving Cert.

Only students from Tarbert who go home for lunch may leave the school at lunch time. Again, they will need to bring a letter from parents or guardians at the beginning of the school year. Parents are advised that it is only wise to give permission if the student is going home to a supervised environment. If this is not the case the student should stay at school during lunch time.

## e) Leaving School before the end of the School Day

In this case a student must:

- Bring a note from home in the school journal.
- Before leaving, get this note signed by the Year Head or Deputy Principal.
- Sign the Departures Book in the main office.
- Be collected at the main office area only (not gate or roadside) by a parent/guardian and signed out officially by that parent in the Departures Book unless they have their own transport.

It should also be noted that a 'friend' or 'relative' over 18 will not be considered as acting in loco parentis unless the Principal/Deputy are satisfied the departure is authorised.

## f) Student attendance at funerals connected to the school community

Funerals are a very emotional and upsetting time and can be extremely difficult when the school community is directly affected. The school will always try to manage these times as sensitively and sensibly as possible, taking account of the needs of families, relatives and friends. Circumstances and arrangements will differ on every occasion but in general there are a few ground rules by which we will always abide.

The first advice we give is that students attending a funeral should always do so in the company of a parent and it is preferable that they do not attend school on the day in question.

However, if they do come to school then the usual rules for leaving school for an appointment apply. They must bring a note from a parent, sign out at the Office, inform their Year Head and be collected by a parent. Students should not leave school unaccompanied and, when being collected, should not offer transport to other students unless that arrangement has previously been cleared by parents with the Deputy Principal.

Students who have their own transport and who have written permission from parents to attend the funeral must follow the procedures outlined above and must not provide transport for others.

## g) Student Drivers

Students who are given permission by parents to use their own or parents cars to come to school have a huge trust placed in them to behave responsibly, firstly in relation to taking due care on the roads and secondly in relation to school attendance. This trust involves

- Arriving at school on time.
- Remaining in school for the full day.
- Parking outside the school, near to the pedestrian entrance and avoiding the bus bays.
- Making sure that the car is left locked and secure and is not used by themselves or any student in the course of the day.
- Leaving the car keys with the Deputy Principal for safe-keeping.

If they must leave school early for any reason the procedures as outlined above apply.

## h) Unauthorised Absences

Students are expected to attend all of their timetabled classes in the course of the school day. Each student is given a copy of his/her timetable and this is clearly explained at the beginning of each year. Students who, without permission and without a genuine reason, do not attend their timetabled classes will firstly be spoken to by the Year Head or Deputy Principal in order to discover the reason for the absence. If no satisfactory reason is given, then the time lost from class will have to be made up at lunch times, and parents will be informed.

All students must attend P.E. class. Only those who present a doctor's certificate can be excused.

Every effort will be made to ensure that students are in a safe and secure environment in class and any sources of worry or tension will be dealt with discreetly and confidentially.

### iii. Punctuality

Being on time for school, being on time for class, being on time for an appointment of any kind is one of the ways in which we show one another respect. If we are persistently late, without genuine reason, then it indicates we do not have any respect for the person we are meeting or the place we are going. There are always times when we are genuinely delayed, but persistent lateness is a very bad habit and a very bad example. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school to be punctual to the best of their ability.

Students are encouraged to be punctual by being given good example by teachers and by regular reminders in Assembly and in all classes of the importance of punctuality.

Students, who are late for class in the course of the day without adequate explanation, will have a late stamp recorded in their journal. These late stamps will then be reviewed by the class teacher and the student may be given lunchtime detention if it is felt that a pattern of deliberate lateness is developing.

### iv. General Behaviour

Schools must provide a safe and well ordered environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. In order for a large group of people to work together there must be rules on which we all agree and by which we all abide. The general school rules apply in the school building, on the school grounds and on all school trips whether inside or outside of school times. School rules also apply in all casual encounters between students or between students and school staff, again inside or outside of school time, where the basis for interaction is linked to the school.

## a) Classroom Rules

The following rules have been agreed and apply in all classrooms:

- Teachers and students will be prepared for class - teachers will have appropriate resources; students will have all necessary equipment and will have completed any work previously assigned for them. Students must learn to take responsibility for completing homework to the very best of their ability and presenting it on time in line with the school homework policy which can be viewed on the school website at [www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie](http://www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie).
- All students are required to have the school journal with them in every class. Students must write their homework in the journal and tick it off when completed. Journals are a tool to help students to organise themselves and their work and are also a means of communication between home and school. The condition of the journal is often a reflection of the student's attitude to school- it should be free of graffiti and should not be covered or defaced in any way. Parents of all students in both Junior and Senior cycle are asked to check and sign the journal every week. Journals are checked and countersigned weekly by class teachers. A lost journal should be reported to the class teacher or Year Head.
- Teachers and students will be on time for class.
- All teachers will organise a class seating arrangement and students will sit in their assigned place. This will help with roll-call and more importantly will prevent isolation and time-wasting. Teachers may at any time change the seating arrangement of one student or of the entire class.
- Because attendance is so important teachers will take a roll call in every class.
- Students will concentrate on the work of the class, co-operate with the teacher and will not interfere with the work or attention of any other student.

- Students who need to leave class during the class period must ask the permission of the teacher at an appropriate time and in a courteous manner. Permission will generally be granted. However, there can be occasions when requests are frequent and disruptive. In such instances teachers are free to use their discretion about giving permission. Students are provided with a "green book" which the teacher will sign before the student leaves the class. Unless in the case of illness students will be allowed to leave the class one at a time.
- When a teacher is absent due to illness, in-service or extra-curricular activities the class will be taken by a substitute teacher. All the normal classroom rules will apply and the students are expected to co-operate fully with the substitute teacher and complete any work assigned to them.

Certain subject areas, in particular the practical, science and computer areas may have additional rules which concern the use of equipment and machinery. These are specific to each subject area and will be explained to students in those classes.

## b) Implementing the Classroom Rules

Teachers are responsible for implementing the rules within their own classrooms. They will do this by explaining them to the class, outlining the reasons for them and ensuring that all students understand them. They will also explain what the consequences are if the rules are broken.

In general the consequences are as follows:

- The teacher will explain to the student why a certain behaviour is unacceptable and ask for co-operation.
- If this does not bring about an improvement the teacher may put a note in the student's journal with a request that it is signed by parent or guardian. Such notes will be checked and recorded by the student's Year Head.
- The teacher may set extra work to be completed at home.

- The teacher may separate the student from the rest of the class, if this is possible while still maintaining supervision, or set separate work to be done in class.
- The teacher may require the student to attend a break time or lunch time class outside of timetabled hours.
- The teacher will keep a record of any measures taken to manage behaviour.

If all of the above have been tried and the behaviour has not improved then the teacher will consult with the Year Head to ask for advice and support in managing the student's behaviour. This may involve the teacher filling a Behaviour Report Sheet detailing the teacher's concerns. This Report Sheet will be retained in the student's file.

The Year Head will then discuss the issues with the student and decide on appropriate interventions. These may include:

- Requesting the intervention of the Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain.
- Contact with the student's parents.
- The use of a Report Card to monitor classroom behaviour.
- Lunchtime detention.
- Removal of a privilege- e.g. involvement in extracurricular activity or a school trip.
- Requesting the intervention of the Deputy Principal.
- A recommendation to the Principal to formally suspend the student.

## v. General Rules

### a) Bullying

We aim at all times to encourage an environment in this school where bullying cannot thrive. We do this in many ways - the issue of bullying is explained in classes such as SPHE, RE & CSPE; at Assemblies we talk about the many forms bullying can take; we encourage reporting by guaranteeing that telling somebody will not make the situation worse. The First Year mentors are trained to talk to their particular students about it; we encourage parents to inform the school if they have concerns about it; we survey the First Years about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed; we implement in the first instance a no-blame policy where all involved are given a chance to look at their behaviour, to explain the reasons for it and to become aware of the effect it is having and the hurt it is causing. We have a separate Anti-Bullying Policy which outlines in more detail the various forms of bullying, the approach we take and possible consequences for those who persist in bullying behaviour. This policy can be viewed on the school website at [www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie](http://www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie)

### b) Safety

Movement around the school building and grounds must be safe for everybody at all times. Therefore there can be no horseplay - such as running on corridors, pushing, shouting, tripping or punching - even in fun. On the corridors it is important to remember the simple rule - Walk on the Right, in particular when there are large numbers moving from room to room. Gathering in big groups which can cause an obstruction must be avoided.

We must avoid all aggression - that is verbal abuse, fighting, assault.

In fact we must avoid all physical contact (including gestures of affection) which is inappropriate in a school setting.

We must avoid smart remarks and critical comments to students or staff, in particular to those people we do not know.

We must remember that a school is a work environment where we promote learning and encourage the development of a positive attitude and mature social skills.

### c) Sexting

Sexting is the sharing of sexual text, video and photographic content using mobile phones, apps, social networking services and other internet technologies. The sharing of explicit text, images and/or video, is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour and will have serious consequences and sanctions for those involved in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Please note that:

- All incidents involving creating, storing, or sharing of explicit text, images and/or video of children under the age of 17 years will be reported as an incident to the Gardaí and Túsla and the State Claims Agency (to the latter as there is the potential to cause injury/harm to the individual).
- Sharing of explicit text, images and/or videos of pupils in the school will incur serious sanctions including suspension and up to expulsion as determined by the Board of Management.

### d)Health

This is a health-promoting school. We encourage healthy eating and we promote healthy options in the school shop. We do not allow students to bring any substances into the school that are harmful to their own health or to the health of others.

These substances range from those that are mildly harmful such as energy drinks, to the more serious, such as cigarettes, alcohol and other illegal substances for which we have a separate Substance Abuse Policy. See school website [www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie](http://www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie)

### e) Property

- a) Personal Property: Ideally students should only bring to school items that are needed for class work and homework and all of these items should be clearly marked with the student's name. Money should be carefully minded and never left in a locker or school bag. Large sums of money can be handed in to the school office for safe-keeping.

Other items of personal property: Valuable jewellery should not be worn to school. Mobile phones, if they must be brought to school, must be turned off and kept in the school bag at all times during the school day. See the school website for separate mobile phone policy.

MP3 players, iPods, computer games, etc. are a complete distraction from schoolwork and are not to be used during school time. Again, ideally they should not be brought to school at all.

The safeguarding of any of the above items is the responsibility of the individual student and the school authorities cannot take responsibility for loss or theft.

Penknives, laser pens, fireworks, stink bombs - any such items that can cause injury, vandalism or serious nuisance are absolutely prohibited in the school.

b) School Property: We aim to keep the school building well maintained, clean, cheerful and welcoming in order to provide a pleasant and motivating environment for students and staff. We encourage and expect students to treat the building and its contents with respect.

Deliberate damage to property (this includes graffiti) will not be tolerated and items which cause litter or a health hazard such as chewing gum, popcorn and crisps are not allowed.

#### f) School Uniform

There is a separate school uniform policy which outlines the details and a vantages of our school uniform. See school website [www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie](http://www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie). Students are expected to wear all parts of their uniform, the uniform must be clean and neat and must not be concealed by a hooded sweatshirt or jumper. Jackets must be removed in class.

#### g) Hair, Make-up and Jewellery

Hair colour should be confined to what can be described as “natural shades”, make-up should be no more than a moderate amount of foundation and

jewellery should not be excessive or anything that might be dangerous in practical subjects or sporting activities.

#### h) Implementing the General Rules

The vast majority of students behave responsibly most of the time. On occasions however people make mistakes and behave inappropriately. This can sometimes have serious consequences - someone else could be offended or physically hurt, property could be damaged or stolen. In such cases the school response will be along the following lines:

- The incident will be investigated and recorded and those involved will be spoken to individually, and if appropriate, as a group. In the course of the investigation it may be necessary to search bags or lockers-this will only be done in consultation with and in the presence of the student(s) concerned.
- All efforts will be made to resolve the issue pastorally in the first instance -this may involve the support of the Guidance Department, the Chaplain or the school counselling service.
- In matters where there has been a deliberate and serious breach of the rules parents will be informed and the following may then occur: detention may be imposed; there may be a request for financial compensation; it may be necessary to involve the Gardaí; suspension from class (in-house) or from school may be considered; expulsion may be recommended to the Board of Management. There is a specific policy on Suspension and Expulsion. See school website [www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie](http://www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie)

#### CONCLUSION

Schools are amazing places. The students who attend bring with them all that is going on in their lives, their dreams, their problems, their talents and abilities, their emotional lives, their happiness, their hurt and their pain. In this school we try to provide all the support we can in a caring and orderly environment. This is why we have all of the procedures and rules just outlined. Sometimes rules will be broken, occasionally with serious consequences. Whatever the difficulty, as a school we will always be fair and understanding and, where possible, flexible. We will always try to resolve

the issues that arise in the best interest of the student, hoping always to make every experience one from which we can all learn and improve.

This Code of Behaviour has been developed in consultation with students, staff, parents and members of the Board of Management. It was formally adopted as school policy by the Board of Management on S-1 0-2010.

In the Code all reference to "parent/ s" is taken to include "guardian/s"

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