

# **ELPHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Elphin Community College is a Vocational School under the trusteeship of Co. Roscommon V.E.C. It was established in 1942. Our school exists to serve the educational needs of the community which we serve. We aspire to provide an environment which acknowledges educational achievement, enhances student self-confidence, promotes life skills and attitudes which will enable students to live fulfilling lives and so contribute to the betterment of society. We actively aspire to develop partnership between teachers, parents and the wider community.

As trustees of Elphin Community College, the Board of Management are committed to the successful implementation of the Education legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000, in particular, Section 5. The central purpose of the school community is the moral, intellectual, physical and social education of the student. This Community seeks to create the atmosphere of care and concern in which the student can grow to maturity. We fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion, and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

### **PROGRAMMES**

The school operates within the context of Department of Education and Science regulations and programs as set out in the Education Act (1998). It should be noted that a six-year cycle operates in this school, which includes a Transition Year Programme which follows Junior Cycle.

The School follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science.

The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by Department of Education and Science grants, voluntary contributions and fund raising.

Pupils at Junior and Senior cycle follow a core programme, with a number of optional subjects. Religious education and physical education are part of the core programme for all pupils.

## **ENROLMENT PROCEDURES**

For those students wishing to enrol in Elphin Community College the enclosed application for enrolment form must be completed and returned to the school principal along with an original birth certificate on or before 28<sup>th</sup> February of the year of entry. An 'Open Day' for intending 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils will be held. Pupils in local primary schools will be notified in advance. Also please read the school's code of behaviour and discipline carefully and sign the accompanying Declaration Form. This form must be returned with the Application Form.

## **NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

Decisions made in relation to admission are made by the School in accordance with school policy. Except in very exceptional circumstances decisions regarding enrolment will be notified to parents within 21 days of the closing date for applications, namely February 28<sup>th</sup> of the year of entry.

To ensure a place, parents/guardians must notify the school of their acceptance of a place within 14 days of being accepted.

*It should also be noted that under The Department of Education and Science rules secondary school students must be aged 12 on 1<sup>st</sup> January in the calendar year following the applicant's entry into first year.*

## **ASSESSMENT**

It should also be noted that all applicants will be required to complete an assessment test in order to help the school to assess the needs of the student. This test is not used to exclude any student. The school operates a policy of non-streaming.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Board of Management of Elphin Community College welcomes pupils with special educational needs. In order to assess the needs of those students the school will access the student's records from primary school well in advance of entry into the school. This may involve requesting a copy of the student's medical/psychological or individual educational report if available. The school may deem it necessary to request immediate assessment in order to assist it in establishing educational and training needs of the student relevant to his special needs and to profile the support services required. This will require parental permission.

Having gathered all the relevant information, the Board of Management will assess how these needs can be met. The school will also meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the applicant's needs and the school's capabilities to meet those needs. If further resources are required the Department of Education and Science will be requested to provide the necessary assistance e.g. special needs assistant, specialised equipment, transport etc. Where adequate resources are not forthcoming from the Department of Education and Science the school may have to postpone admission until the Department of Education & Science put such resources in place. The Board of Management will do all it possibly can to identify, plan and provide for the needs of a special needs or disabled student seeking admission to the school.

## **TRANSFERS**

Students may transfer to Elphin Community College at any time from another school, subject to the school's Admissions Policy. However the school must be satisfied with the reasons for the transfer and to this end information will be requested from the students former schools concerning attendance, behaviour educational progress, disabilities and special needs.

*With the best interest of the student in mind and his educational welfare and considering the issues relating to mid year transfer which may include subject choices, class sizes and available resources, the school Board may decide to refuse admission at that time and advise his parents/guardians to reapply if they so wish at the start of the following school year.*

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Finally the Board of Management wishes to state that it reserves the right to refuse an application for admission in exceptional circumstances. Also parents have the right to appeal a refusal by a school to enrol a student under Section 29 of the Education Act.

## **CHECKLIST**

When applying for admission to Elphin Community College, please ensure that you have read the following documents carefully:

- Admissions Policy
- School Code of Behaviour and Conduct
- Student anti bullying policy
- Elphin Community College Prospectus
- Other school policies which may be agreed from time to time by the Board of Management which will be sent to parents/guardians and will be part of the requirement for enrolment in Elphin Community College.

*When applying for admission please make sure you complete and return the following:*

- Fully completed application for enrolment
- Signed Declaration Form of acceptance of Code of Behaviour
- Original Birth Certificate
- School Transport form if applicable

**Please return completed forms to:**  
**The Principal,**  
**Elphin Community College,**  
**Elphin,**  
**Co. Roscommon.**  
**Tel./Fax. 071-9635031/9635038**  
**E-Mail: [ccolelphin.ias@eircom.net](mailto:ccolelphin.ias@eircom.net)**

# Code of Behaviour Policy

## ***Mission Statement***

Our school exists to serve the educational needs of the community which we serve. We aspire to provide an environment which acknowledges educational achievement, enhances student self-confidence promotes life skills and attitudes which will enable students to live fulfilling lives and so contribute to the betterment of society. We actively aspire to develop partnership between teachers, parents and the wider community.

The school, through information sessions, information booklets and meetings with parents seeks to promote a partnership between home and school to facilitate the transition of students from primary to secondary school. The academic needs of students are assessed and where learning support is needed it is provided. Pupils are advised and helped to get themselves organised for school and to make good progress at school.

## ***Pastoral Structures and Procedures which promote positive discipline:***

Each teacher takes a pastoral interest in their students, advising them of their expectations in class and how to complete assignments. Each teacher will advise students with regard to appropriate classroom behaviour.

Each year group will have a Year Head. The Year Head will monitor student behaviour, attendance and academic progress. S/he will be sensitive to information with regard to the personal background and circumstances of individual students and will bring such information to the attention of the school authorities as appropriate.

Students will be encouraged to set goals for themselves regarding their relations with each other, their relations with people in authority and progress in their work. Each student will be encouraged to seek excellence in striving to do their own personal best in these three areas.

## ***Formal Code of Behaviour:***

The Code of Behaviour has been drawn up with the aim of helping students to mature into socially conscious caring adults who are motivated to achieving their full potential. The Code is set out in a user-friendly, positive way for students as the ***Golden Rule***. (See Appendix 1)

The ***Code of Behaviour*** has the following aims:

- To train students in self-understanding and self-discipline.
- To train students to have respect and consideration for one another.
- To create an appropriate learning environment for students.
- To prepare our students for the responsibilities of the adult world.

### ***School Rules***

1. Students must attend school regularly and punctually. Satisfactory written explanations must be given for all absences, beforehand if possible.
2. Students must be neatly groomed and must wear the full correct uniform at all times.
3. Students must treat one another courteously and must show proper respect for one another's property.
4. All school property must be treated with respect. Students may be required to pay for any damage to such property.
5. Due respect must be shown to all members of the Staff at all times.
6. Students must come to class on time, bring with them all the required texts etc., and during class behave in a manner that allows both themselves and others to gain full benefit from the lesson being given.
7. While in Specialist Rooms e.g. Laboratories, Practical Rooms, Computer Rooms etc. and on playing fields, playing courts etc. students must adhere to regulations laid down in the interest of safety.
8. All pupils must have a Homework Journal. All homework, written and/or learned should be noted at the end of each class period. All homework assigned must be properly learned and presented.
9. While in the school building students must not run and must adhere to regulations about movement from one classroom to another.
10. Students must not absent themselves from class without permission.
11. Only 6<sup>th</sup> year students have permission to leave the school premises at morning break time. Students must not place themselves out of bounds.
12. Students are reminded that while wearing school uniform they are representing our school and must ensure that they do not behave in a manner that will bring discredit on themselves, their parents or their school.
13. The use of certain substances e.g. tobacco, chewing gum, etc., is forbidden. Alcoholic drink and drugs are banned and any breach will be viewed as extremely serious, will result in automatic suspension for a period and may have much more serious consequences.
14. The use of Mobile Phones is prohibited in the school.

### ***Sanctions***

Sanctions range from a word of warning to expulsion. It is expected that students will accept and respond positively to correction from members of Staff be it inside or outside of the classroom. Students who fail to do so or who repeatedly disregard any regulation may be given a period of detention. This may be after school or during lunchtime. A system of Complaint and Report Cards may also be used. Further sanctions may include temporary confiscation of property, suspension from school and expulsion.

In most cases these level of sanction follow one another. However, in certain cases, the degree of disrespect or disregard for school rules shown by a single act may warrant that a student be immediately suspended or expelled without going through the process of the minor sanctions.

## ***Corrective Structures and Procedures***

The initial sanctions outlined above are effective for the majority of students. However a small number of students may require further attention. The following structures and procedures indicate how the situation will normally be dealt with when the need arises.

- The teacher deals with the issue
- The matter is referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- The matter may be referred to the Board of Management. The Board may be asked to consider expulsion.
- The matter may be referred by way of appeal to the VEC under Section 29 of the Education Act.
- The matter may be referred by way of further appeal to Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act.

## ***General Procedures***

1. Any breach of classroom discipline will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. Sanctions include; a written punishment exercise, contact with parents, detention for a short period after class (15 minutes maximum) or at breaktime.
2. Where the behaviour is repeated or is of a more serious nature, the class teacher will complete a written complaint card.
3. Where the above procedures have been followed and there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct; where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature - intimidation, bullying, bad language, damage to property, harassment, refusal to obey reasonable instructions or disruption to the educational process; where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter may be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal. The Deputy Principal or Principal will investigate the matter. Following investigation sanctions may be applied ~ these may include counselling the student, reprimand, detention, issuing a Report Card, contacting parents, inviting parents to visit the school, formal written warning to parents, a recommendation for suspension or other sanction. Where a student is placed on detention 24 hours notice is given to the student.
4. Where an investigation is carried out a brief note will be maintained by the person carrying it out. Where any student is interviewed about alleged or suspected wrongdoing by others or by themselves a brief note of the interview will be taken; students may be asked to make a written statement about their knowledge of an incident.
5. Where there is persistent low-level disruption or misconduct and the student has failed to respond to the strategies followed so far; where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature; where students have failed to comply with the sanctions outlined above or where there are other considerations which merit it, the matter may be referred to the Principal. The Principal will review the matter and will, if necessary, engage in further investigation. Following review and/or investigation one or more of the sanctions outlined in paragraph 3 above may be applied. The principal may suspend a student from the school for a period of up to six days. The principal will report on discipline matters to the Board of Management where appropriate.
6. Decisions to suspend a student for a period of more than six days will be considered by the Board of Management. A decision to expel a student rests with the Board of Management in conjunction with the VEC. Where it is decided to expel a student, or where the cumulative number of days on suspension for a particular student exceeds twenty in one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the VEC and subsequently (if necessary) to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act.

7. The National Education Welfare Board will be informed of any suspension of six days or more and of any expulsion. The NEWB shall also be informed if any suspension gives rise to a situation where a student's total absences for the school year exceed 20 days. Appeals may be made to the Department of Education and Science in the case of an expulsion or where the cumulative total number of days on suspension for a student exceeds twenty in any one year.

### ***Procedures to be followed in the event of a Suspension***

1. The matter will be very serious: either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the principal or deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present their side of the story. The student will be asked to give an account in writing.
4. The parents (or guardians) will be given an opportunity to present their case. Where a suspension is being considered a student may be required to stay at home until their parents/guardians visit the school.
5. Parents will normally be advised in writing of a decision to suspend. The letter will include the following
  - Notification of the decision & reason(s) for same
  - The effective date and duration of the suspension
  - A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the duration of the suspension
  - Expectations of a student while on suspension
  - Requirements and Procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school
  - If the NEWB has been informed, this should be stated
  - Rights of appeal e.g. Section 29 Appeal if applicable. If consideration is being given to expulsion as a sanction in this instance, the letter must state this unambiguously.
6. The Principal may suspend a student for up to six days. All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management at their next ordinary meeting.
7. Suspensions for a period longer than six days will normally be considered by the Board of Management, except in the case of very a disruptive pupil who has already been suspended. In this case the Board may delegate authority to suspend such a pupil for up to two weeks to the principal. Prior to a decision being made to suspend a pupil parents will be given an opportunity to make their case to the Board or Principal.
8. Where the Board of Management suspends a student, and the cumulative number of days suspension for that student exceeds twenty in any one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the VEC and subsequently (if necessary) to the Department of Education and Science.
9. Where a proposal to suspend is before the Board of Management and a student is involved in a further serious disciplinary incident that student may be required to stay at home or suspended for a period up to three days, until the matter is decided upon by the Board of Management, whichever is the earlier. In that event the Board will take the further incident into account in reaching its decision.

10. Grounds for removing a suspension: Following a suspension the parents/guardians (or student over 18 years) may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter further. Where the school is satisfied that new circumstances have come to light that have a bearing on the matter, the decision to suspend may be reviewed (by those who made the decision) and an alternative sanction imposed if deemed appropriate.

***Procedures to be followed in the event that expulsion is being considered***

1. The matter will be very serious: either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the principal or deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present their side of the story. The student will be asked to give an account in writing.
4. The parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to present their case. Where an expulsion is being considered a student may be required to stay at home until the matter is referred to the Board of Management and VEC.
5. An emergency meeting of the Board of Management and VEC, with a single item agenda will be called, as soon as practicable and normally within 6 school days to determine the issue, A minimum of three days notice will be given to parents in such a case.
6. At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any member has a conflict of interest in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the Board is satisfied that a conflict of interest exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting at the same time as the parents (or guardians), student (if over 18 and representing himself or herself) and the principal.
7. Written documentation will be supplied to parents and Board Members with the notice of the Board meeting. Such documentation will include
  - The details of the allegation against the student
  - A copy of the case to be presented against the student at the Board hearing
  - A copy of any supporting documentation that may be used by the school in support of its case. A clear statement that expulsion is being considered as a sanction in this instance.
  - An invitation to make a written submission and/or to be present and heard at the hearing.
  - Expectations of the student (while on suspension pending a hearing).
  - A statement that the NEWB has been informed, this should be stated.
  - Rights of appeal e.g. Section 29 Appeal.
8. Parents may be accompanied at the Board hearing but, as this is a lay forum, legal representation is not the normal practice.
9. The principal will present the case against the student and will be available to answer questions from parents and Board Members,
10. The parents/guardians (or student over 18) will present their case and will be and will be available to answer questions from parents and Board Members.
11. Once the principal and the parents have made their cases they will withdraw from the meeting.

12. Should the Board require the professional advice of the principal, the principal may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.

13. When considering an expulsion or a long-term suspension the Board will ensure that the following factors are given due consideration:

- ◆ the seriousness of the misbehaviour
- ◆ the likelihood of a recurrence
- ◆ the impact the misbehaviour is having on the learning of others
- ◆ the safety of students and teachers in the school
- ◆ the degree to which the behaviour was in violation of written school rule(s) and the relative importance of the rule(s)
- ◆ whether the incident was perpetrated by the individual on his/her own or whether as part of a group; if as part of a group, the extent to which the individual is responsible for the misbehaviour
- ◆ the extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the misbehaviour
- ◆ the frequency of misbehaviour from the student
- ◆ the cumulative discipline record of the student
- ◆ what other sanctions have been tried and the level of success of such sanctions
- ◆ the responses of the student and his/her parents or guardians to any previous misbehaviour
- ◆ the academic, attendance and extra-curricular record of the student
- ◆ the age of the student
- ◆ whether the student is of school-leaving age
- ◆ whether the student is due to sit for any State Examinations in the near future

14. The Board will reach its decision and will record the reasons for deciding as it does.

15. Where the Board of Management and VEC decides to expel a student a student, the parents/guardians (and/or a student over 18) the student and will be informed by letter delivered by registered post. The letter will include the following;

- ◆ Notice of the decision to expel and the effective date of the expulsion (this shall not be before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt by an educational welfare officer of the notification to expel).
- ◆ The reasons for the expulsion.

- ◆ Their right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act and information about the Appeal process including the titles, phone number(s) and addresses of the relevant authorities and that the student will remain out of the school until the outcome of an Appeal (if any) is known.
- ◆ A statement the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) has been informed.
- ◆ A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the period of 20 days required by the Education Welfare Officer of the NEWB to examine alternative provision for the student.
- ◆ Expectations of the student while under the care of his/her parents/guardians.

## Appendix 1

### THE GOLDEN RULE

The golden rule sets out in a positive manner our expectations of all students in the school. A copy of The Golden Rule is placed in every classroom in the school. The rule, which applies to all in the school community, adults and young people alike, states that "**Respect will be shown to all persons at all times!**"

In other words, we will all act with courtesy and consideration to one another at all times.

This means that:

- 1. You always try to understand other people's point of view.**
- 2. In class you make it as easy as possible for everyone to learn and for the teacher to teach.** (This means arriving on time with everything you need for that lesson, beginning and ending the lesson in a courteous and orderly way, listening carefully, following instructions, helping each other when appropriate and being quiet and sensible at all times).
- 3. You move gently and quietly about the school.** (This means never running, barging or shouting, but being ready to help by opening doors, standing back to let people pass and helping to carry things). On the corridors please keep to the left.
- 4. You always speak politely to everyone** (even if you feel bad tempered) and use a low voice. (Shouting is always discourteous).
- 5. You are silent** whenever you are required to be.
- 6. You keep the school clean and tidy** so that it is a welcoming place we can all be proud of. (This means putting all litter in bins, keeping walls and furniture clean and unmarked and taking great care of displays, particularly of other people's work).

**7. Out of school**, walking locally or with a school group, you always know that the school's reputation depends on the way you behave.

As part of our Code of Behaviour we have a very strong policy against Bullying, The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on request- It is part of our Anti-Bullying Code that

- Every pupil is entitled to an education free from harassment or abuse and bullying is not tolerated in the school.
- There should be no unwelcome name-calling, skitting, teasing, verbal abuse, physical abuse or fighting; no unwelcome comments about a pupil or their family.
- Any incident brought to the attention of teachers or the school authorities will be taken seriously and investigated. If the problem persists the perpetrator(s) may face serious disciplinary sanctions.

If you are being bullied or are the subject of unwelcome attention or if you are aware that anyone else is suffering in this way, please tell someone you trust immediately. It is very important that we are informed about any unwelcome incidents as soon as possible.

# ELPHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## Mission Statement:

In Elphin Community College, we aim to promote an atmosphere of openness, honesty and respect for all in order to create and maintain a pleasant and safe working and learning environment. Bullying behaviour will not be tolerated and all incidents will be investigated fairly and promptly.

## Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to protect all members of our school community from being bullied and to ensure that effective remedial steps are taken where bullying arises.

In September 1993, the Department of Education and Science issued Guidelines on countering bullying behaviour in Primary and Post Primary schools. The Guidelines say that

"The role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all of its students. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and may cause psychological damage. The effects of bullying can be devastating. As such it is an issue that must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies. These measures are designed to ensure as far as possible that bullying does not take place and to enable all members of the school community to act effectively in dealing with bullying behaviour where it occurs."

**This policy is further informed by the *Education Act, 1998*; the *Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*; the *Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004* and the *Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools*.**

## Scope of policy.

This policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment and sexual harassment.

The scope of this policy extends to all relationships within the school, i.e. student to student, student to staff & staff to student.

This policy applies to:

- school time (including break times)
- going to and from school
- school tours/trips
- extra-curricular activities

## Definition.

**Bullying** is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others - such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological, physical, racial, sexual or relational. Although isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour do not constitute bullying they will not be condoned and will be subject to the normal disciplinary sanctions. This policy deals with repeated and systematic behaviour which is offensive and potentially harmful to others. For the purposes of this policy the term bullying also encompasses harassment and sexual harassment. **Harassment** is any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. **Sexual harassment** is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. The nine grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

### **Types of behaviour involved.**

The means of bullying are constantly changing and the following list of types of bullying behaviour may be expanded in the light of the experience of the school community:

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email/website messages
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Isolation & exclusion
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Name calling
- Slagging
- Sarcasm
- Public humiliation
- Deliberate disruption of class
- A combination of any of the types listed

**The school does not accept that any of these behaviours can be properly described as “only messing”**

### **Rights & Responsibilities.**

Students and staff have a right to work and learn in a safe environment free from harassment and intimidation. Parents have a right to be sure their children are safe from bullying while in school. Bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated. All concerned have a responsibility to respect and uphold the rights of others. In particular everyone has a responsibility to report bullying behaviour when they become aware of it.

### **Preventative Measures.**

The school will work proactively to ensure as far as it can that bullying does not take place. Bullying can be prevented by raising awareness of all in the school community about the reality of bullying and of its detrimental effects. In order to prevent bullying the school uses a number of strategies:

- Whole school agreement about policy & procedures to be followed when bullying is reported.

- An anti-bullying curriculum will be taught to all 1<sup>st</sup> year students early in the school year.
- A curriculum to deal with relational/girl bullying will be taught following staff training.
- Parent Awareness Programme.
- Anti-bullying Awareness/ Friendship Week annually.
- Regular confidential questionnaire to be followed up within 2 weeks.
- Comment box
- Mentoring system.
- Informing new staff, students & parents about policy & procedures.
- Induction form for all new students & parents on 1<sup>st</sup> Year induction day.
- On-going teacher training in the management of bullying behaviour.
- Curricular areas offer opportunities to address issues relating to respect, justice and fair play.
- The school seeks to promote a positive, open school climate at all times.
- The school seeks opportunities to enhance the self-worth of all its students.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are open to students.
- The school has developed leaflets for parents and students on bullying - they are available on request.

### **Procedures for telling.**

***It is of the utmost importance that students tell if they are being bullied in school or if they know of another student who is being bullied***

- Students are assured that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with confidentially, within the Child Protection Guidelines. Only those who need to know will be informed & every effort will be made to ensure the safety of a student reporting bullying.
- Students may report bullying to any teacher with whom they feel comfortable, by direct approach at an appropriate time, by handing up a note with homework, by phoning, by placing a note in the comment box or by getting a friend/ parent to tell on their behalf.
- A regular confidential questionnaire will be given to students to allow them to tell safely.
- Non-teaching staff should report to the Deputy Principal or Principal any incidents of bullying behaviour observed by them or mentioned to them.

### **Procedures for Recording**

- A record of all reports of bullying will be kept. Students *may* be asked to write an account of the incident.
- When an investigation is complete & a student has been found to be bullying, they may be asked to sign an agreement that the behaviour will not recur. A parent may also be asked to sign.
- Class Observation Strategies and Sociograms may be used by teachers to ascertain the extent & nature of bullying in a class.
- These records will be kept on file for 3 years after all students concerned in the incident have left the school. The records will then be shredded.

## **Procedures for Investigating**

- Students reporting bullying and students alleged to be bullying will be interviewed separately by designated teachers during a specific time within the school time-table.
- Witnesses may also be interviewed.
- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.
- However the agreed sanction system will apply where a student has been found to have used bullying behaviour.
- A record will be kept of the proceedings.

## **Procedures for Resolving**

Students will not normally be brought together to resolve incidents and this will only take place where the victim is willing and able to face the alleged bully. Parents may be asked to give permission for mediation to occur.

## **Agreed Sanction System**

The existing sanction system for discipline as contained in the Code of Behaviour will apply and sanctions may range from a verbal warning to other sanctions depending on the seriousness of the offence.

When a student/s have been found to have used bullying behaviour the Sanction System is as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Offence: Verbal Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Offence: Detention ***with work to complete*** and contact with parents

3<sup>rd</sup> Offence: Interview with parents and student

Further Offences: Persistent bullying behaviour will be referred to Board of Management with the possibility of suspension ***with work to complete***. The student will be interviewed on return to school in the presence of the parents/ guardians, the principal & B.O.M. personnel. They will be asked to sign a Behaviour Contract.

## **Supports**

Support will be offered to students who are victims and to students using bullying behaviour on a persistent basis e.g. counselling, referral to psychological services, etc.

## **Monitoring of incidents:**

Teacher/s will link in with all students concerned for a period of time to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

## **Procedure for dealing with incidents of student to staff bullying**

Bullying of a staff member by a student will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

1. Staff member keeps records.
2. Staff member reports incident(s) to Principal.
3. Student will be interviewed by Principal.
4. Sanctions will apply where a student has been found to have used a bullying behaviour.
5. A record will be kept of the proceedings.

**N.B. Bullying behaviour/harassment towards staff out of school treated as bullying within school.**

### **Sanctions**

**1<sup>st</sup> Offence:** Verbal Warning

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offence:** Interview with parents and student.

**Further Offences:**

Referred to Board of Management and proceed as with student to student bullying sanction.

### **Procedure for dealing with incidents of staff to student bullying**

Students must report bullying incidents by a staff member to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Parents/ Guardians may report on their behalf.

For the safety of all concerned, the student will be interviewed by two staff members (Principal & another) and may be asked to give a written account. Witnesses may be interviewed.

The staff member concerned will be interviewed by the principal. He/She may request to have a second person present. He/she may be asked for a written account of the incident.

Where bullying has occurred, the staff member will be given a verbal warning by the principal.

Further offences will be dealt with by the B.O.M.

Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between the student & parent/s and the staff member. This will only happen with the permission of both parties. Records will be kept for 3 years after the student has left the school. They will then be shredded.

### **Informing new staff members**

An information pack for new staff will be provided to make new staff members aware of policy and procedures to be followed and a staff member will be assigned to act as mentor for new staff members to make them aware of policy & procedures.

### **Policy Evaluation.**

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years by questionnaire to all parties, staff, students and parents.

## **ELPHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **Substance Use Policy**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008 sets out a detailed programme of action to be implemented to combat the very serious problem of drug misuse in our society. The strategy highlights the important contribution that schools can make in the area of education and prevention, and requires them to have substance use policies in place.

The central objective of our school's substance use policy is the welfare, care and protection of every young person in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The policy will address both education concerning alcohol, tobacco and drugs and the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances.

## **THE SCHOOL POSITION**

Elphin Community College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs.

The policy has been drawn up and accepted by the Staff, Parents/Guardians, Board of Management and Students. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety.

In this policy "Drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally.

The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

## **THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

As stated in the School's mission statement Elphin Community College aspires to provide an environment which acknowledges educational achievement, enhances student self-confidence, promotes life skills and attitudes which will enable students to live fulfilling lives and so contribute to the betterment of society. We actively aspire to develop partnership between staff parents and the wider community. This is the ethos which guides this Policy.

## **SCOPE**

- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs during school time (including break times) and on all school related activities by any member of the school community.
- The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the school or on school activities by any student.
- The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances. Students may have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use only.
- Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform the school.
- The School must be informed if a student has a medical condition and relevant teachers, e.g. games teacher must be informed also.
- A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter" medicine.
- Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

### **The policy is focused in four key areas:**

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.
2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.
3. Training and Staff Development.
4. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.

### **1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.**

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students which will be incorporated into the Social, Personal And Health Education Programme currently running in the school.

Our educational aims are:

- To increase the self esteem and confidence of our students.

- To equip our students with personal and social skills.
- To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.
- To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs.
- To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. All teachers involved in SPHE will be given the opportunity to avail of training in group facilitation skills and personal development.
2. All school staff will be offered where practicable and relevant Drug Information and Drug Awareness training.
3. Outside speakers will be used where appropriate to supplement and reinforce the work done in class.
4. Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the school. Drug information and drug awareness sessions will be organised for parents.

## **2. Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations.

### **Assessing a drug incident**

If there is damage or suspected damage to the student/s, it is essential to

- Seek medical advice immediately.
- Inform school authorities and complete the drug incident report (see Appendix A).

If there is no damage to the student/s, it is important to:

- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use or possession or supply all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- Then complete the drug incident report. (see appendix A)

### **Managing a drug incident**

A limited number of people are involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a "need to know" basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them. In the case of illegal drugs the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact Gardaí - Juvenile Liaison Officer, and any drugs will be dealt with by Gardaí. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If a student has a problem then referral will be recommended. Parents/Guardians, staff and other students involved in the incident will be offered support. Confidentiality is a complex issue. It is important that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with students before any disclosure is made. The well being and welfare of the student and teacher must be a primary focus.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with school rules (see the Code of Behaviour).

## **3. Training & Development**

We will provide where practicable:

### **Staff**

The School will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programmes.

All staff will be offered drug information and awareness training on an ongoing basis.

Specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug related incidents.

We will endeavour that First Aid training will be made available to all staff.

### **Parents/Guardians & Board of Management**

The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops, information evenings and sessions on issues relating to drugs and these opportunities will be offered as part of the induction for parents/guardians of new pupils to the School.

### **Students**

The School will offer all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE classes. TY students will study First Aid.

## **4. Monitoring the Policy, Review and Evaluation**

The Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, or in the light of changing information, by the present group in consultation with the wider school community.

These areas will be reviewed:

- Drug Education Programmes
- Managing Drug Related Incidents
- Parent, Staff and Management Training

### **Evaluation**

Staff, Parents/Guardians, Students and the Board of Management will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again the three specified areas above will be evaluated. Any changes will be incorporated into the amended policy.

### **Dissemination of Policy**

Copies of this policy will be distributed to all the school community. It will be available also from the Principal's Office.

Copies will be given to all new staff and parents of new pupils as part of their induction to the School.

Students will be made aware of the policy within the context of the SPHE programme.

# **ELPHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **MOBILE PHONES POLICY**

### **Rationale for the Policy**

The Misuse of Mobile Phones has a disruptive effect on classroom teaching and learning. There are also inherent dangers associated with the misuse of Camera/Picture Phones. Staff and pupils must be protected from any invasion of privacy or harassment associated with the misuse of Mobile Phones.

Nevertheless, the Board recognises that Mobile Phones do have a positive aspect and can be helpful as a communication tool in emergencies. The Board also acknowledges the integration of Mobile Phones into the culture of adolescents.

The school policy attempts to balance the positive against the negative and encourages the responsible use of Mobile Phones

The Board of Management of Elphin Community College has amended the school policy on Mobile Phones.

### **POLICY**

The use of a mobile phone in school or on school grounds is prohibited. All mobile phones must be switched off in school or on school grounds. A student must not be seen in possession of a mobile phone in school or on school grounds. This policy also applies to out of school activities unless otherwise directed by the teacher in charge.

The use of a phone during the school day is unnecessary as all necessary calls may be made through the school office.

### **SANCTIONS**

**Mobile phones belonging to pupils which cause disruption to a class by ringing/silent ringing or which are being used to transmit or receive text messages or seen in possession of, will be**

- **Confiscated by the teacher, submitted to the main office and held until parent collects same. The student must sign a written guarantee that the phone will not be misused again.**
- **For a second disruption offence the phone will be held until the parent/guardian collects the phone and assures principal that the phone will not be brought back to school.**
- **Further infringements will be regarded as an extremely serious breach of the school code of behaviour.**
- **The misuse of a camera phone – taking or sending inappropriate images, or using the phone to harass – will be considered as an extremely serious discipline offence. The board of management will respond appropriately in such cases and will have the full range of sanctions open to them. In such cases the phone will not be returned until the incident has been dealt with to the board's satisfaction. The pupil will lose the privilege of having a mobile phone in school.**

### **Use of mobile phones by staff**

The Teaching staff are advised that Mobile Phones are not to be used in class unless expressly for school purposes or for emergency use.

### **Electronic Devices**

Students are not permitted to have any electronic devices such as **mp3 players and cameras** on the school premises. They will be confiscated in accordance with the Mobile Phone arrangements. This also applies to out of school activities unless otherwise directed by the teacher in charge. As iPods are not recordable devices there use will be permitted as directed by the teacher in charge. **Laptops may be used for educational purposes only.**