



**St. Flannan's College,
Ennis,
Co. Clare.**

Suspension of Students

1. Introduction

The suspension of a student (i.e. requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days) is part of a number of sanctions within the overall Code of Behaviour of the School.

2. Grounds for Suspension

The purpose of a suspension is to bring about a change in the unacceptable behaviour of the student. The suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is of concern to the school. Accordingly, a decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students;
- an accumulation of four detentions issued in any school academic year
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety;
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Such grounds may exist as a result of:

- the student's ongoing refusal to co-operate with and accept the school's Code of Behaviour;
- a single incident of gross misconduct.

Among the factors that may be considered before a suspension is imposed are:

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour;
- the context of the behaviour;
- the impact of the behaviour;
- the interventions tried to date;
- the appropriateness of suspension as a response;
- the possible impact of the suspension.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardai and to the HSE where appropriate. The Juvenile Liaison Officer may be contacted for support and advice.

3. Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

The Board has delegated to the Principal the authority to suspend a student. The Principal will not normally suspend a student for more than three school days. However, in exceptional circumstances, where the Principal considers that a period of suspension of up to five school days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective, the Principal may impose a suspension of up to five days after consultation with the Chairperson of the Board.

If a suspension of longer than five days is being proposed by the Principal, the Principal should refer the matter to the Board of Management for consideration and approval.

Any one period of suspension imposed by the Board of Management will not normally exceed ten school days.

The Board will review any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more.

4. Procedures in respect of suspension by the Principal

The principles of fair procedures and natural justice will be followed throughout the process leading to a possible suspension. Where an allegation of serious misconduct that could warrant suspension is made a comprehensive investigation by an independent person, such as Year Head or Deputy Principal will be carried out. Detailed notes of the investigation will be kept, CCTV footage reviewed, witnesses interviewed and, if considered appropriate, written statements obtained.

The return of the student following suspension provides an opportunity to emphasise to the student and parents the necessity to behave well following the return to school. It also provides an opportunity for the student and parents to commit to appropriate behaviour and to reaffirm the commitment of the student and parents to the Code of Behaviour of the school. To this end, on his/her return to school, the student may be placed on report to monitor the student's behaviour and progress. The school may also seek agreement on an agreed specific Behaviour Plan for the student.

The student will be informed of the allegation; the parents will be contacted as soon as possible and orally advised of the alleged misconduct and of their right to meet the Principal before a possible suspension is decided on.

If the parents request such a meeting, the Principal will set out the details of the misconduct and provide the student and parents with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

If such a meeting cannot be arranged as a matter of urgency, the parents may be instructed to keep the student at home until the meeting takes place to discuss the matter.

If the Principal decides that a suspension is warranted the parents may be informed orally, and mutually agreeable arrangements made. Notwithstanding such an oral communication, the parents will always be informed in writing of the decision.

The letter setting out the decision will:

- be clear and easy to understand;
- set out the reasons for the suspension;
- give the length of the suspension, including the start date and finish date;
- outline any work assigned to the student during the suspension;
- detail arrangements for return, including the necessity to meet with the Principal or Deputy Principal on the morning of return;
- state the right to appeal the decision of the Principal to the next meeting of the Board.

Should the parents decide to appeal the decision of the Principal to the Board, a written notice of appeal must be received by the Board within three working days from the issue of the suspension letter. The appeal will be heard by the BOM/ Sub-Committee of the BOM within 14 days of receipt of the written notice of appeal. The suspension will be postponed until the appeal has been heard by the Board.

At the meeting at which the Board/ Sub -Committee of the BOM considers the appeal, the Principal will outline the case, and the parents will be invited to respond in writing and/or to be present at the meeting. Both parties will withdraw from the meeting while the Board considers the matter. The Board will carefully consider the grounds for the appeal and the process and procedures adopted in reaching the decision to suspend. If the Board upholds the appeal all records in respect of the suspension are removed from the student's file.

5. Procedures in Respect of Suspension by the Board

Where the Principal is of the view that the alleged misconduct is of such a serious nature that it requires to be considered by the Board, the Principal will inform the parents and arrange for a Board meeting to consider the matter.

Both parties will be invited to attend the meeting, the Principal will detail the alleged misconduct, the parents will be invited to respond and the Board may question either or both parties to assist them in their understanding of the issues. Both parties will withdraw from the meeting while the Board considers the matter. The Board may recall both parties to seek further information or to convey their decision.

The Principal will convey the written decision of the Board to the parents. If a letter detailing a decision to suspend is issued the right of appeal in this case is to the Trustees.

If the incident is of a very grave nature the Principal may decide to suspend the pupil pending a Board of Management meeting, where all sanctions, will be considered.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal or with the Board, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

6. Forms of Suspension

Any exclusion imposed by the school is a suspension.

6.1 Automatic Suspension

A student who incurs any four detentions in the same school year also incurs an “automatic” suspension of two school days. Due process and fair procedures will be followed in the imposition of the suspension. The student and the parents have the right to appeal to the Board.

6.2 Immediate Suspension

The Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary in exceptional circumstances 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 of the school or any other person. Fair procedures will be applied.

6.3 Rolling Suspensions

Rolling suspensions will not be applied. A student will not be suspended again shortly after the return to school unless:

- they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension;
- fair procedures are observed in full;
- the standard applied in judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

6.4 Open-ended Suspension

Students will not be suspended for an indefinite period.

6.5 Suspension during a State Examination

Suspension during a State Examination will only be considered appropriate where there is:

- a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination;
- a threat to the safety of other students and personnel;
- a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

The sanction will be imposed in consultation with the State Examinations Commission and the principles of fair procedure will apply.

7. Appeals

The student and parents have the right to appeal a suspension decision of the Principal to the Board of Management.

The student and parents have the right to appeal a suspension decision of the Board of Management to the Trustees.

Where the total number of days in which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

The Board will formally review any proposed suspension where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more.

8. Reporting

The Principal will inform the Board of Management of the suspension of students, the duration and the reason for such suspensions.

The Principal will prepare a report for the Board at the end of each school year on the operation of this policy. The Board will review the policy in the context of this report.

The Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer of all suspensions greater than six days and of all suspensions greater than twenty days cumulatively.

9. Approval of the policy

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on November 12, 2025.
This policy will be reviewed in 2026.

Signed: *Mr Leonard Cleary*
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: *November 12, 2025*

Signed: *Mr. Donal Cahir*
Principal

Date: *November 12, 2025*