

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

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CONTENTS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mission Statement
- 1.2 School Ethos
- 1.3 Rationale
- 1.4 Preparation/Evaluation of Code
- 1.5 Roles/Responsibilities
- 1.6 Communication of Code

2. Expected Standards of Behaviour

- 2.1 General Policy Regarding Behaviour
- 2.2 Teaching the Code of Behaviour

3 Promoting & Rewarding Positive Behaviour

- 3.1 Formal Reward Structures

4 Rules and Guidelines for Students

- 4.1 Respect and Order
- 4.2 Attendance & Punctuality
- 4.3 Application to Studies
- 4.4 Uniform & Appearance
- 4.5 School Property
- 4.6 Mobile Phones
- 4.7 Illegal Substances
- 4.8 Unacceptable Uses of Social Media Sites
- 4.9 Standards of Behaviour COVID-19

5 Misbehaviour & Appropriate Sanctions

- 5.1 Misdemeanours (Low-Level Disruption)
- 5.2 Isolated Incidents of Misconduct (Low-Level Disruption)
- 5.3 Continuous Misconduct (Mid-Level Disruption)
- 5.4 Serious Misbehaviour (High-Level Disruption)
- 5.5 Procedures for Dealing with Serious Misbehaviour
 - 5.5.1 Lunchtime Detention
 - 5.5.2 Demerits
 - 5.5.3 Suspension/Expulsion
 - 5.5.4 Procedures in Cases of Immediate Suspension
 - 5.5.5 Procedures in Cases of Expulsion

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mission Statement

In Coola Post Primary School, we encourage our students to achieve their maximum individual potential in an environment of fairness and mutual respect.

1.2 School Ethos

- 1. The aim of the School is to allow the students to develop their spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional and physical potential and become fully mature human individuals.
- 2. While respecting and acknowledging the rights of the students, our school also seeks to promote a safe and harmonious working environment for all our staff members.
- 3. This spirit of cherishing the personal welfare of each individual will enhance the social and community development of the students and the importance of them becoming caring and responsible citizens.

4. The school undertakes to cherish the religious, cultural and historical heritage of its students, and make them aware of ecological and environmental concerns, and to encourage in them a love for nature in all its aspects.

5. The school acknowledges the primary rights and duties of parents as educators of their children and will work in close partnership with parents. We also see the school as an integral part of the local community and will follow the educational programmes of the Dept. of Education & Science under the direction of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education & Training Board.

1.3 Rationale

The following Code of Behaviour aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment wherein students can learn and develop to their full potential.

The Code aims to provide a school where each and every student is given an equal opportunity to learn to the best of their ability and to benefit from such a positive learning environment.

In drawing up this Code, the principles of the School Ethos have been carefully observed and preserved.

Furthermore, special care has been taken to ensure that all sections are in compliance with all recent Education Acts, namely:

- The Education Act 1998;
- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000;
- The Equal Status Act 2000;
- The E.P.S.E.N. (Education for persons with special education needs) Act 2004
- Health and Safety Act 2005

The use of the word “parent” includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997, or other person acting in loco parentis who has a child in his or her care, subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts 1952 to 1998, or, where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter.

1.4. Preparation/Evaluation of Code

The teaching staff, pupils and their parents were involved in the development of this policy under the National Education Welfare Board Guidelines.

In Coola Post Primary, it is our practice to review this Code of Behaviour regularly. Such reviews may take the form of discussions about the effectiveness of the code during staff meetings and with other interested parties. If required, slight adjustments may be made to the code before the beginning of each academic year. However, school management, working in consultation with the Board of Management reserves the right to make adjustments to the code during the school year if such adjustments are deemed to be necessary.

1.5. Roles/Responsibilities

Board of Management

The board of management will ensure that an appropriate code of behaviour is in place. They will oversee the preparation / review of the code and only ratify it when they are satisfied that it lawfully meets the needs of the school. They will monitor the implementation of the code.

Principal & Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal working under the direction of the Board of Management will consistently apply the agreed code of behaviour. They will oversee the implementation and teaching of the code by the teaching staff in the school. They will record and deal with all breaches of the code reported to them. School management will also establish procedures to regularly evaluate and review the code.

Teachers

Teachers will implement the Code of Behaviour consistently. They will record and report any breaches of the code. They may teach the Code of Behaviour to the students in class.

Year Heads and Tutors

The Year Heads and Tutors will teach the Code of Behaviour to their year groups and tutor classes and discuss its meaning and how it is implemented. They may also discuss breaches of the Code of Behaviour with students, and try to help the students recognise where they are having difficulty.

1.6. Communication of Code

Prior to enrolling in the school, parents of prospective students will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour. It will also be available to view online on our school website www.coola.ie. Our students and their parents will also have direct access to the code as it will form the initial part of their school journal.

If a student or parent has a concern relating to the code, they may communicate it through a teacher, a member of school management or a representative on either the Student Council or Parents' Association. Likewise, if a parent has concerns or is considering bringing a complaint about a behavioural matter, he/she may contact the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

2. EXPECTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

2.1. General Policy Regarding Behaviour

• A Learning Community

It will be the function of Coola Post Primary School to establish behavioural procedures so that the right to learn is realised and the need to ensure that the values of mutual respect, self-discipline and social responsibility permeate the life of the school community. The school recognises the need to protect the rights of students and to ensure the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where effective teaching and learning can take place.

• Safe School for Students

Every student attending Coola Post Primary has the right to enjoy school life. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all of the school community. The school must be safe and secure for everyone. Therefore, verbal abuse, physical abuse and other anti-social activities are forbidden. Everyone will be expected to move throughout the school in an orderly manner and comply immediately with any instructions given by **any** member of staff.

• Health Promoting School

Parents, students and staff at Coola Post Primary School are entitled to have a healthy and safe school environment. Consequently, smoking, consumption of alcohol and substance abuse are all prohibited. We encourage all our students to become involved in sport and other physical activities including PE Class. Students are also encouraged to eat healthily.

• Discipline and Sanctions

In order to achieve a healthy and safe school environment, self-discipline is required of all members of the school community. All students are therefore expected to subscribe to the school's Code of Behaviour as outlined in this document. If and when required, the school will apply sanctions in a fair, transparent and consistent manner and will keep all parties informed where appropriate.

When dealing with misbehavior, the school will endeavour to help the student understand the nature of the problem, behaviours involved and work towards a satisfactory and lasting solution.

- **Attendance**

Students are expected to be in attendance daily, to be punctual and to participate in all aspects of school life so that each student can maximise his/her potential.

Students who fail to have a satisfactory attendance record will be reported to the relevant state authorities in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

2. 2 Teaching the Code of Behaviour

- **Students**

Every student Coola Post Primary School will have a copy of the Code of Behaviour included in their school journal. Teaching and discussing the Code of Behaviour will be undertaken as part of the pastoral care policy of the school. The Yearheads/Tutors will do this at various times throughout the year. However class teachers may also highlight various aspects of the code as the opportunity may arise.

- **Staff**

The present cohort of staff was involved in the preparation and review of this Code of Behaviour. At the beginning of every academic year each member of staff is given an updated version of the code. All new staff, including substitute teachers, will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour and asked to make themselves familiar with its contents.

- **Students with Special Educational Needs**

Coola Post Primary School is committed to supporting the diverse learning needs of all its students, and recognises that some accommodations may be required to implement the Code of Behaviour for students with special educational needs in order to foster behaviour for learning. Students with special educational needs may need support to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school. To facilitate this, class teachers will check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that students with special educational needs can understand. Not every student with special educational needs will need support in this area, but where it is deemed appropriate, the student's understanding of the Code of Behaviour will be checked to ensure comprehension. In incidents where it has been established that the Code of Behaviour has been breached in such a manner that is not related to the student's special educational needs, that student may be subject to the same sanctions as any other student.

3. PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

All members of the school community will be expected to display positive behaviour throughout the school. School management and staff will endeavour to lead by example by displaying the expected standards of punctuality, courtesy, efficiency, compassion and general demeanour.

Positive behaviour will be recognised as often as possible by staff. This recognition may take the form of:

- verbal praise
- display of students' work
- positive comments written in the school journal
- positive comments recorded on the student reports.

3.1 Rewards System

The school is committed to a policy of recognition, encouragement and reward of positive behaviour. Pupils will be given recognition for:

- a) Outstanding achievements;
- b) Sporting accomplishments;
- c) Extra-curricular success;
- d) Good manners and demeanour.

Acknowledgment may take the form of:

- Praise from staff members, privately and/or publicly;
- An affirmative note in student's journal or exercise book;
- A positive report home;
- Announcements made on the intercom;
- Class rewards such as outings;
- School Prize-giving;
- Using local media.

Our school aims to encourage each student to fulfil his/her educational potential, academically and in every other respect.

4. RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Students will be required to comply with the following:

4.1 Respect and Order

- a. Respect for all fellow students.
- b. Respectful behaviour towards all staff members both inside and outside of school hours.
- c. Good behaviour when travelling to and from school.
- d. Respect for property of staff and fellow students.
- e. Respectful language at all times.
- f. Cigarette smoking, alcohol, illicit drugs/substances are prohibited.
- g. The possession of catapults, knives, stink bombs, bangers, fireworks laser pens and other weapons are forbidden.
- h. Mobile phones must be switched to silent on entering school buildings and **may only** be used in class under the direction of teachers.
- i. It is expected that students will respond positively and respectfully to correction from all staff members both inside and outside the classroom. It is particularly important that students will respond respectfully and instantly to any direction given by any teacher supervising during breaks.
- j. Students are expected to walk on the left hand side of corridors and move in an orderly and sensible fashion about the school as directed by staff.

4.2 Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance at school is expected (i.e. all day every day). A student absent from school for a day or days must bring a note of explanation written in the back of the School Journal and the note must be written and signed by the parent. The Year Head/Tutor will check the journal for this note of explanation at assembly. If a note of explanation is not produced to the Year Head/Tutor within five days of the absence, then the absence will go down as unexplained.

It should be noted that the school has a legal obligation under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to notify the Education Welfare Board where a student has been absent on a cumulative basis of more than twenty days in any one academic year.

Students are not allowed to leave school during the course of the school day without written permission from a parent, nor without the permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal or the Year-Head. Parents are expected to be present at the school office when collecting a student. If they are unable to do so, then the written permission must be verified by telephoning the school only in **exceptional** circumstances. Any student leaving the school early must sign the "signing-out" book. Students must be in time for morning assembly with their Yearhead. If a student makes a habit of arriving late, then the school will contact their parents.

Visits to toilets, lockers, etc., must be confined to specific breaks. In exceptional circumstances the subject teacher may give permission to make such visits outside of specified breaks.

Students must be punctual for all classes. Mitching or scheming from school or class is regarded as a serious breach of school discipline and will be dealt with accordingly. Students are not permitted outside the school grounds during the school day without permission.

4.3 Application to studies.

Students must have prescribed textbooks and equipment. All books and other materials required for class must be brought to class. Students will be required to purchase the School Journal. The use of the Journal is compulsory and it must be made available to all teachers at all times. Communications from parents regarding absences should be written into the area at the back of the Journal designed for this purpose. The Journal must be kept neat, tidy and in good condition. If graffiti or other unnecessary writing is found on the School Journal, it must be replaced immediately and the student will be responsible for the cost of replacement.

Good behaviour is expected in class, in the general school environs and in all school-related activities. All homework must be attempted and a genuine effort made to complete it. Parents can write a note in the Journal if a student is having difficulty with a particular part of homework given. Students representing the school in extra-curricular activities must endeavor to get homework when they return to school. Teachers will allow time for these students to take down homework from their peers in whatever class they return in.

4.4 Uniform and Appearance

Students must wear their **full school uniform every day**, and parents/guardians are obliged to support the school authorities in this regard.

4.5 School Property

- Dropping litter and chewing gum are forbidden.
- Damage to school property, equipment or buildings is forbidden. This includes books provided under the school's Book Rental Scheme. Repair or replacement of property damaged by students must be paid for by them.
- The school cannot be held responsible for property lost or stolen. Money, phones and valuables should not be left in schoolbags, lockers or unattended in school or on buses. This applies during state exams also.
- All students may be requested on occasion to participate in the school's "Combat Litter" Programme inside the school and within the school grounds.

4.6 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones must be switched to silent on entering school buildings and may only be used in class under the direction of teachers for educational purposes.

If a student's mobile phone disturbs a class, the teacher may confiscate the phone. Phones may be collected after finish of class on Friday evenings.

If a phone or other electronic device is used to take pictures or record conversations without consent, or if a student refuses to hand over a phone with its sim card, it will be considered a serious breach of behaviour and will be dealt with under the serious misbehaviour section.

4.7 Illegal Substances

Consumption of alcohol, smoking and substance abuse are all prohibited in Coola Post Primary School.

Any student found in possession of, using or distributing any such substances, will be dealt with under the procedures used for serious misbehaviour, (see section 5.5). This also applies to students while they are in the vicinity of the school prior to the beginning of school and after school ends.

4.8 Unacceptable uses of social media sites

All cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis. The school and its Board of Management consider the following to be serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour, and they will be dealt with accordingly. The list is not exhaustive.

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of the school community.
- Forwarding or 'liking' material that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party.
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the school's image or reputation.

- Creating a fake profile that impersonates any other member of the school community.
- Sending or posting material that is confidential to the school.
- Uses that violate copyright law, fail to observe licensing agreements or infringe on others intellectual property rights.
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of inappropriate images or obscene material.

4.9 Standards of Behaviour COVID-19

Students are expected to comply with any control measures directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19, including, but not limited to:

- Wearing a face-mask. All students at post-primary level are required to wear a face-mask (subject to a limited number of exceptions set out in relevant Department of Education guidance).
- Face masks must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset/deemed offensive to any member of the school community.
- Face-masks must be worn properly, covering the nose and mouth.
- Maintaining a social-distance of at least 1 metre and where possible, 2 metres, from other students and staff.
- Performing hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser on entering the school.
- Repeating hand-hygiene when entering a new classroom, after using the toilets, and at regular intervals throughout the school day and when directed by school staff. All rooms and toilets have dispensing units.
- Maintaining good respiratory-hygiene. In this regard, students should:
 - cover nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing/sneezing, and dispose of used tissue in waste-bin and perform hand hygiene.
 - cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand, if no tissues are available.
 - keep contaminated hands away from the eyes and nose
 - carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials, do not spit or deliberately cough or sneeze at or towards any other person in the school.
- Keeping to the one-way system through the new building.
- Keeping to your base-classroom during break-times. Social distancing and mask-wearing are to be observed in base-classrooms during breaks. If students need time without their masks it must be outside while maintaining a 2m social distance.
- Not sharing materials or stationery, such as pens, calculators, rulers, etc. with other students;
- Not attending school for 14 days after returning from travel out of the country, in line with Government guidelines for travel.
- Not attending school if displaying COVID-19 like symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice.
- Not attending school when tested positive for COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice.
- Not attending school if identified by the HSE as a person who has been in contact with another person who has contracted COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice.
- Not attending school if a member of the student's household is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice.
- Telling a teacher or other member of staff when a student feels unwell at school. In that regard:
 - The student will be collected from the school as soon as possible by a parent/guardian or a person designated by the parent/guardian for such purpose.
 - Parents must ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details so that they can be contacted by the school if required.
- Complying with any other such directions as advised by the DES and/or HSE and communicated to the school community.
- Students should be aware that the above is a non-exhaustive list. Students are expected to follow all instructions from staff that aim to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and minimise its spread.

Failure to comply with the Standards of Behaviour in relation to Covid-19 prevention

Failure by a student to comply with the Standards of Behaviour expected to help prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 will constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour of Coola PPS and s/he may be subject to sanction up to and including suspension or permanent exclusion. Any actions or sanctions taken in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the school's Code of Behaviour, the requirements of the EWS Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour and relevant requirements of the Education and Welfare Act 2000.

Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature, seriousness and context of the behaviour. A student engaging in aggressive, threatening or unacceptable behaviour that creates or increases the risk of COVID-19 infection for staff, other students or visitors to the school, may be removed from class and, if necessary, from the school premises with immediate effect, pending any further action to be taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

5. MISBEHAVIOUR & APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS

The following subsections do not represent an exhaustive list of inappropriate or unacceptable behavior, and each individual case will be dealt with on its merits by the school authorities. When dealing with students who have breached the Code of Behaviour, the school will always apply the principles of natural justice, i.e.

- The right of all sides to be heard.
- The right to impartiality.
- The right to know and defend any case that one has been accused of.

Although every case will be dealt with on its merits the school management may take account of previous records of good and/or poor behaviour in the school.

Bearing this in mind, unacceptable behaviour and sanctions that may apply in each case include the following;

5.1 Misdemeanours

Misdemeanours include isolated minor breaches of school regulations and isolated infringements related to school work, homework, discipline, general order (both within the classroom and externally).

Where such behaviour is noted by the teaching staff or referred to them by caretaking or administrative staff, standard sanctions in general use may be applied, such as:

- Separation within the classroom;
- Additional homework such as essays;
- Allocation of demerits;
- Extra questions or work appropriate to the subject area;
- Removal from class under supervision;
- Report to the Tutor and/or Year Head;
- Supervised detention by the teacher;
- Being assigned tasks within the school building and grounds, e.g. lifting litter, cleaning desks;
- Parental contact.

5.2 Isolated Incidents of Misconduct

Isolated incidents of misconduct may include the following:

- Use of abusive language;
- Misbehaviour in class of an isolated nature;
- A fight between students in the school and its environs;
- An outburst of bad behaviour in class.

Sanctions for such offences may include demerits, suspension, lunchtime detention and/or any of the sanctions listed in section 5.1.

5.3 Continuous Misconduct

Continuous misconduct includes repeated misdemeanours or repeated breaches of good order. Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Continuous disruption of classes;
- Failure to present homework on a continuous basis;
- Failure to bring necessary books, equipment and resources on a continuous basis;
- Bullying or harassment of other students, (the school also operates a separate anti-bullying policy)
- Offensive language to fellow students;
- Offensive or abusive language to any staff member;
- General behaviour inappropriate to the smooth operation of the school, both in the classroom and in the corridor;

Sanctions for such offences include detention, demerits, carrying out school-related tasks, the placing of the student “on report”, lunchtime detention, or suspension. Repeated continuous misconduct can bring further sanctions including exclusion of the student from the school or other such appropriate sanction as may be deemed reasonable.

It should be noted that a suspension will result in the student being excluded from school-related activities during the term of the suspension.

5.4 Serious Misbehaviour

As a guide for parents and pupils, here is a list of some of the offences which will be regarded as serious:

- Assault, threat or abuse of a member of staff by a student;
- Assault, threat or abuse of a fellow student;
- Damage to property of staff or students;
- Putting a teacher’s or fellow student’s health or safety at risk;
- Possession of drugs or alcohol. Sale, consumption or distribution of such alcohol or drugs;
- Possession of a knife or any other offensive or dangerous devices, including catapults, bangers, laser pens, fireworks, stink bombs, etc.;
- Repeated instances of bullying and harassment;
- Defiance of and confrontation with any member of staff which could seek to undermine the authority of that person;
- Attempts to intimidate bully or harass any member of staff;
- Malicious damage to property;
- Theft within the school;
- Serious misbehaviour on school-related activities or outings.

Students who become involved in serious misconduct, whether inside or outside the school grounds, which may reflect adversely on the good standing and reputation of the school in the local community may be liable to sanction. The school reserves the right to invoke the code of behaviour to deal with such incidents and impose the full range of sanctions up to and including expulsion.

Serious misbehaviour may warrant instant suspension or possible expulsion. The school operates formal procedures in relation to suspensions and expulsions (including Appeals Procedures) which may be obtained on request from the school.

It should be noted that in all instances of misbehaviour and in the use of sanctions students will be advised and encouraged to correct their behaviour and be encouraged to participate more positively within the school.

5.5 Procedures for Dealing with Serious Misbehaviour

5.5.1 Lunchtime Detention

A student can be placed on lunchtime detention by the Principal, Deputy Principal or his / her Year Head or by their class teacher for failing to complete homework. In normal circumstances lunchtime detention will only be applied after the student has received a number of verbal reprimands. A student may be placed on lunchtime detention for one day, however, depending on the severity of the misbehaviour he / she may need to serve a number of consecutive days in detention. Normally a student will be informed a day in advance of their detention. However, management may impose an immediate detention if the situation warrants it. Detention lasts for 20 minutes. Students are allowed 5 minutes at the beginning of their lunch break and 5

minutes at the end. The detention room will be supervised by a teacher who will record all who are present in the detention book and assign work for them to complete. This work must be attempted and handed back up to the teacher. Students who fail to turn up for detention, or arrive late, or do not follow the directions of the teacher in charge, or in any way disrupt the detention room may be faced with suspension or expulsion.

5.5.2 Demerits

Teachers will record demerits for breaches of school rules. When a student accumulates five demerits, their Year head will put a note to that effect in the student's diary. When a student has accumulated ten demerits a further note will be put in their diary communicating to parents the seriousness of the situation and parents may be contacted by phone to discuss the matter further. Suspension may occur after fifteen demerits.

5.5.3 Suspension/Expulsion

Coola Post Primary School operates separate suspension and expulsion policies which are available from the school office on request or can be viewed on our school website; www.coola.ie

However, the following is a summary of the content of each policy:

Suspension or possible expulsion will be applied, following an enquiry by the Principal, a staff member or disciplinary committee delegated by him/her to do so.

5.5.4 Procedures in cases of immediate suspension

- The student will be suspended immediately.
- The parents will be notified in writing or by phone informing them of the reason for and duration of suspension.
- The parents may discuss the decision with the Principal by meeting him/her or his/her representative.
- Parents may appeal the decision of the Principal to the Board of Management where they may present a case to the Board.

- If the Board of Management upholds the decision of the Principal, the parents may appeal the case to a sub-committee of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education & Training Board within seven days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case had been heard.
- A parent, together with the suspended student, may be asked to meet with the Principal or his/her representative before the student is re-admitted to the school.
- Any work in preparation for State Examinations missed through suspension is the responsibility of the student.

5.5.5 Procedures in cases of expulsion

- The student will be suspended immediately pending a decision on expulsion.
- Parents will be notified in writing, informing them of the reason and advising them of the Principal's recommendation for expulsion.
- Parents may present a case to the Principal by meeting him/her. Following such a meeting the Principal will inform them of the decision/recommendation made.
- If the Principal recommends an expulsion, the Board of Management will meet to make a decision on the matter.
- Parents will be advised in writing of their rights to present a case to the Board of Management of the school before a decision is reached.
- Parents may appeal the decision of the Board of Management to a sub-committee of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education & Training Board within seven days of the Board of Management meeting at which the case has been heard.

COOLA POST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

DECLARATION

Student Declaration

I, _____, of _____
_____ (address),

having read Coola Post Primary School's Code of Behaviour and having discussed it with my parents, will abide by all its conditions as outlined.

Signed: _____ _____
 Student Date

Parents/Guardians Declaration

I/We the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of
(Student's Name) _____ Class: _____

having read Coola Post Primary School's Code of Behaviour and discussed it with our son/daughter, undertake to support the Board of Management, School Management and Staff in the implementation of school rules and disciplinary procedures as outlined for the duration of his/her education at Coola Post Primary School.

Signed: _____ _____
 Parent/Guardian Date

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Date