

Portadown College

Code of Conduct for Students (2020-21)



At the time of publication, the College, alongside other educational institutions in Northern Ireland, is responding to the unprecedented circumstances of Covid-19.

In light of this situation and due to unforeseen necessity, the Code of Conduct for Students may be updated during the 2020-21 academic year. Students and parents/carers will be informed accordingly.

INTRODUCTION

Central to the whole process of teaching and learning, and to the development of our students in the widest sense, is the maintenance of high standards of discipline and behaviour.

Our aims are to promote a positive, caring atmosphere in which individual self-discipline can develop and to create a community with shared values and a sense of collective responsibility. This in turn arises from good relationships among students, between students and staff, within the home and between home and College. In this regard, it is our expectation that all students are respected, valued and involved in the life of the College, irrespective of religious belief, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or physical appearance. Recognition of good behaviour, positive attitudes, application to work and extra-curricular involvement will contribute to the development of these relationships.

The positive side of College life is not measured through academic success alone but through achievements in all areas. Each student is encouraged to fulfil his/her intellectual, spiritual, physical, social and emotional potential. Such relationships depend upon mutual respect and an awareness of each other's rights and responsibilities. Students have the right to be taught effectively in a proper environment and to have access to a well-balanced and appropriate curriculum. In return they are expected to be co-operative, well-mannered, to respect others and to contribute positively to College life. They must be familiar with, and abide by, the College's Code of Conduct, be punctual and work to the best of their ability.

Close co-operation between home and College is essential for high achievement and the maintenance of good discipline. Parents/carers have the right to expect adequate information and reasonable access, to be listened to and to know that their young people are safe, secure and properly taught. In return they have the responsibility to send their young people to College punctually, fully prepared, to monitor their student's progress, to offer relevant information, to meet with staff when necessary and be familiar with, and support the College's policies.

Teachers are expected to act professionally, be approachable and maintain high standards at all times. In return they have the right to be allowed to teach, to be listened to, to be respected and to receive the full support of students and parents/carers in upholding the College's standards and values.

Success in developing a positive ethos reduces the need for sanctions and contributes to the fulfilment of our aims outlined above.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Good attendance at College is essential for academic progress. It is important that College procedures are followed properly in relation to attendance as these are government requirements. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored and recorded through the College's Information Management System (SIMS). **Absences from College must always be accounted for in writing.**

Teacher supervision is not available before 8.20am or after 4.00pm. Students are therefore not permitted to enter the College buildings before 8:20am. Students arriving between 8:20 – 8:30am must go straight to the library, after 8:30am – all locker areas can be accessed. Students should be in College before 9am for Assembly or whatever alternative is arranged for a prompt 9:00am start. Students should not be on the College premises after 3.45pm unless they have permission or are participating in an activity led by a member of staff or other authorised adult(s).

Absence:

On the first day after an absence, the student should bring a note signed by his/her parent or carer to the Group Tutor explaining the reason for absence if a response has not been made to a Truancy Alert text. If a note or response to the Truancy Alert text message has not been received one week after the first day back following an absence the student will be placed in a Tuesday lunchtime detention.

If a student is going to be absent for more than two days, the College must be informed and the reason for absence explained. Parents/carers should always plan family holidays outside term time as these have a direct impact on students' academic progress.

Failure to attend timetabled classes will be regarded as unauthorised absence and will result in a Friday detention.

If arriving late:

Students **arriving after 9.00am** and before **9.10am** should enter by the FRONT DOORS and sign the Lates file. A student **arriving after 9.10am** must sign the late register in the Office. If the late arrival is as a result of an appointment then the student should bring a note signed by a parent/carers, explaining the reason and this note must be given to the Office Staff. Any student late more than three times and without an acceptable reason will be placed in Friday after school detention.

If needing to leave the College during the school day:

Any student seeking to leave College early or for a short period during the day must hand in a note signed by a parent/carers to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) before **9.15am**. As far as possible, routine medical or dental appointments should be made outside College hours. **Notes signed by students, even those over eighteen years of age, are not acceptable.**

All students leaving College for appointments must seek permission in writing prior to leaving and must also **register in the signing-out book**. Leaving College without permission will result in an after school detention.

Students should note that registering in the signing out book is a method of recording who is present in the College building which is necessary for health and safety reasons; signing the book does not equate to permission to leave. Failure to follow the procedures for signing in or out of College will result in a lunchtime detention. **Students must always seek permission as outlined above.**

If illness/injury occurs during the school day:

A student who feels ill or has been injured in College must:

- report immediately for care and attention to a teacher and the College Office.
- speak to a member of the office staff who will contact home for someone to come and collect them.

Students can use the medical room for one period but should then either return to class or ask the office staff to arrange for them to be collected by a parent/carer. Students must only sign out when their parent/carer has come to the office to collect them.

He or she must NEVER leave the College premises, stay in the toilets, make their own arrangements to leave the College or go to the Medical Room without reporting to the College Office.

Driving lessons

Sixth form students are permitted to leave College for a driving lesson (1 hour) provided:

- A note from a parent/carer has been given to a member of SLT in advance (see above)
- The lesson is during private study periods.

Students are **not permitted** to take driving lessons during any timetabled class **including games periods** except for a driving test (practical or theory).

Games

The Year 12 and Sixth Form Games programme affords students opportunities for participation in a broad range of activities which contribute to the well-being of all students. The College values the support of parents/carers in encouraging full participation in these activities.

Medical Exemption from Games (MEG)

Students who wish to be medically exempt from Games must bring a note to the Head of Boys'/Girls' PE by 9:15am on the morning of games day (Wednesday – Year13/14, Thursday - Year 12). Students should go to the MEG room at 1:50pm and bring materials for private study. It should be noted that students who are medically exempt from games must remain in the MEG room and are not permitted to go to other parts of the College to complete coursework or other tasks. Students who have forgotten their kit for that day must attend MEG and submit a note to the Head of Boys'/Girls' PE the following day.

Students who fail to bring their PE/Games kit or a note for MEG on three occasions will be placed in an after school detention.

Voluntary Work School placements

Students must follow the registration and signing out procedures as directed by the Teacher in Charge. Failure to do so will result in a lunchtime detention. Repeated failure to follow the procedures and attend punctually at the placement will result in an after school detention and possible removal from the placement.

If a placement is cancelled the Teacher in Charge will provide details of where students should register with them. Students should remember to bring necessary books etc. for private study during these periods.

Please note:

Any departure without seeking permission as outlined above will be regarded as an unauthorised absence, the sanction for which is an after school detention. Only students in Year 13 and Year 14 have the privilege of leaving College at lunchtime and must return in time for afternoon classes. The privilege of leaving early on a Friday afternoon (when a **Year 14** student has no timetabled classes and a permission form has been returned) may be withdrawn for a set period if the requirements of the subjects they are studying are not met.

Pro-forma absence forms for parents to use are available on the College website.

UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE (to be read in conjunction with Uniform Lists)

Students are expected to take pride in their appearance and to ensure that their uniform is worn properly at all times, including on the way to and from College and on any occasion when representing the College. Shirts must be tucked in at all times, with the top button fastened and tie done up. Skirts must be worn just below the knee.

A plain dark coat, anorak, fleece, hoodie (each of these items of clothing to be grey, blue or black and without logos or writing), or PC sports outdoor jacket are acceptable. The College pullover is the only item of clothing allowed to be worn over the College shirt/blouse and under the College blazer. Only plain black shoes are acceptable and they should be clean and polished. Trainers of any kind are not permitted other than for PE classes and in cases of medical need. Other accessories such as hats, scarves and gloves must be grey, blue or black. Boys' socks should be grey or black. Girls should wear black opaque tights. Students must wear the appropriate school kit for all games activities and travelling to or from games or sporting fixtures.

Hairstyles should be tidy, neat and acceptable to the College. Unacceptable hairstyles are those which take away from the appearance of the College uniform and detract from the good name of the College in the community. Extreme styles are not acceptable. Students are permitted to colour their hair but we do not accept the use of unnatural colours nor will we accept multi-coloured styles which go beyond the normal limits of highlighting. If in doubt, check with a Vice Principal or Year Head before having your hair styled. Make-up must be unobtrusive and nails must be **short**, one colour and no nail paraphernalia is permitted (subject to review). All boys must be clean shaven.

The only jewellery permitted is a watch, ring and **unobtrusive** stud earrings (two in each ear lobe). Large rings which can be deemed to be dangerous may not be worn. Earrings are not permitted to be worn in the cartilage of the ear. With the exception of two pairs of stud earrings (see above), we do not permit the wearing of jewellery which involves body piercing. Such jewellery raises concerns about health and safety and is not in keeping with the good appearance of the College uniform. Students may not, therefore, wear studs or rings around the ear or in the nose, tongue, eyebrow etc. at any time. Only clear retainers can be used in any such piercings.

Badges, wristbands, emblems or any other paraphernalia which are deemed by College as likely to cause offence or detract from the good appearance of the College uniform may not be worn.

Students are also required to wear full College uniform when attending external examination sessions and full College uniform when in College for any reason during study leave and INSET days. This reduces security problems and makes it easier to identify unauthorised visitors.

Students participating in PE classes, the games programme or representing the College as team members must wear the designated College PE/Games kit as detailed in the College uniform list.

Failure to observe the above requirements will result in a Tuesday lunch-time detention. On-going failure to comply with the rule will result in a Friday detention.

Students who are not properly dressed and whose appearance does not meet College standards will be subject to College disciplinary procedures and sanctions, which may include being sent home. **The acceptability of uniform, hairstyles, jewellery and make-up is determined by the senior staff in the College.**

If a temporary change from regulation College uniform has to be made, a written explanation of the reason should be provided by parents/carers to the Group Tutor.

THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

Students have a responsibility to ensure that the College grounds and premises are kept tidy and free of litter at all times. Students should take ownership and pride in their own locker areas.

Students are not permitted to consume drinks in assembly.

Each student is responsible for his/her own property. The College cannot be held responsible for possessions which are lost; valuable items should not be brought to College.

All clothing, bags, cases, sports equipment, books etc. must be clearly labelled with the student's name. The College Office or a member of staff should be notified immediately of the loss of any article. Any article found by students should be taken as soon as possible to the College Office.

A locker is allocated to every student in Year 11 and for students in other Year Groups if requested. They are expensive to maintain and replace and must be treated with care. Damage to lockers should be reported immediately and deliberate damage or vandalism will be treated very seriously and must be paid for.

All personal property (except outdoor clothing), retained even temporarily in College, must be stored in a locked locker. Sports clothing should not be left overnight in College. Rugby boots or any footwear likely to damage the College floors must not be worn inside the main College premises.

Valuables should never be left in lockers, changing rooms or cloakrooms. During PE or Games students should give their valuables to the teacher in charge for safe-keeping. Lockers should be cleared out at the end of the academic year and the lock removed, otherwise any contents will be disposed of.

Students are required to keep all text-books, stationery and College equipment in good condition. Text-books remain the property of the College and must be returned when required. Students should be aware that departments may apply a charge if textbooks are defaced. A charge may also apply if textbooks or equipment is lost or not returned when requested to cover replacement costs.

Students must not deface College property. Graffiti or any other damage caused deliberately or through carelessness must be paid for. For the protection of College property, chewing gum is forbidden. Students must not interfere with notices or posters on the College notice-boards. All notices which are not related to official College clubs or societies must be sanctioned by the Principal or a Vice Principal who will sign the notice to authenticate it.

The Sixth Form Centre Common Room is only for the use of Year 14. Students who drive to College must complete a Use of Car in School Grounds form and return it to the school office before they bring a car onto the school grounds. Only Year 14 Students are permitted to park on the College grounds and only in the front car parks beside the Technology and Art buildings. Students who park in any other area or who fail to show consideration for other users will be placed in a lunchtime detention. Students who persistently fail to comply with this requirement may have their permission to park on the College grounds withdrawn.

To help ensure a safe environment, the co-operation of students is requested in identifying suspicious activity and strangers in the College buildings and grounds. The latter should not be approached but their presence reported as quickly as possible to a member of the teaching or ancillary staff. All visitors should be wearing identification passes issued by the College Office.

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

Portadown College students are expected to behave in a manner which will not discredit themselves, their parents/carers or their College. This includes posting or uploading material onto social networking or internet sites. Agreement with this Code of Conduct also indicates compliance with the Online Safety Policy and the Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

All students must sign the College ICT Acceptable Use Policy and follow the online safety guidance provided in Personal Development (PD) classes to minimise risk regarding on line content, contacts and conduct.

Students should observe all safety precautions in all College activities and not do anything which would endanger the well-being of others.

Students should move quietly and in good order from class to class and keep to the left. In the interests of safety, running in the corridors or on the stairs is strictly forbidden. Accidents in the College should be reported immediately to a member of staff.

Students may visit the locker areas at the beginning (up to 9.15am) and end of the school day and during break and lunch. Going to locker areas at any other time is not permitted. Water dispensers may only be used at the displayed times. The sanction for using lockers/water dispensers outside of the designated times is a Lunchtime Detention.

Students must ensure they have the appropriate notes, books, bags or equipment required and should not return to the locker area to leave any possessions between classes.

Students must not bring to College or use items such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes, solvents, alcohol, illegal drugs.

Smoking is forbidden. Students must not be in possession of smoking materials (including e-cigarettes), or engage in smoking or be in the company of another student smoking on the College premises, attending College events or when in College uniform.

Students must not have in their possession any article of a disruptive, offensive or dangerous nature.

Students may only use their mobile phones up to **8:55am** and at the end of the school day, at break and lunch time. However, mobile technology must not be used at any time during the school day, or at school events to capture visual or audio material. Mobile phones must be switched off during class and in the corridors. As stated in the Online Safety Policy, the only exception to this rule is when a teacher has given permission for use to enable a student to complete an activity with a clear educational purpose.

Headphones/earphones may only be used during recreational time. They may be used at other times at the discretion of the teacher/librarian.

Students are reminded that mobile phones are prohibited in examination halls.

Students are not permitted to undertake any unauthorised selling in the College or order any food deliveries to the College.

Students must follow all COVID-19 related procedures in line with current Public Health Agency/Department of Education guidance, including adherence to social distancing. Any students who willfully refuse to adhere to arrangements of social distancing or deliberately cough or spit at anyone will be placed in a Friday detention.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

In order to promote a classroom environment conducive to learning, students are expected to:

- Attend timetabled classes (including study rooms) punctually
- Enter the classroom in an orderly manner
- Be equipped with all materials required for the lesson
- Settle quickly and quietly so that the teacher can begin the lesson promptly
- Show respect to the teacher and fellow students through courteous language
- Refrain from the use of offensive and/or abusive language
- Contribute purposefully, productively and positively to the lesson
- Adhere to safety rules during practical lessons
- Show respect to all members of staff and visitors to the College

Any student entering a classroom should knock the classroom door before entering, to speak to a teacher. Food and drinks (except water) should not be consumed in class.

STUDY ROOMS (YEARS 13 AND 14)

In order to promote an environment conducive to independent study, students are expected to:

- Enter the room in an orderly manner
- Be equipped with all materials required for the duration of study
- Settle quickly and quietly so that study can begin promptly
- Show respect to the teacher and fellow students through courteous language and language appropriate to an educational setting
- Be purposefully, productively and positively engaged in study
- Only use C2k or personal electronic devices for educational purposes

Students wishing to listen to music should make a selection at the start of the study period and then put their phone away in a pocket. Any students using electronic devices to access the internet must do so solely for purposes of school work. Food and drinks (except water) should not be consumed in study rooms.

Any student wishing to complete work in another part of the College must **complete a study room excusal form in full**, get it signed by a member of the department where they will be working and hand the form to the member of staff in the study room.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS, SCHOOL TRIPS, EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SPORT

Students involved in any educational visit, school trip, extra-curricular activity or sport should recognise they are ambassadors for the College and therefore must **adhere to the Code of Conduct and any additional rules** and regulations set in place for that trip/activity/sport. Although there may be additional guidelines for subject specific trips/activities and sport the following should always be adhered to:

- Rules with regard to smoking, alcohol and the use of illegal drugs apply to all trips and visits, including residentials i.e.
 - Students must not bring or use items such as solvents, alcohol, cigarettes (including e-cigarettes), illegal drugs or other items deemed inappropriate
 - Smoking is forbidden. Students must not be in possession of smoking materials, or engage in smoking

- Students must not have in their possession any article of a disruptive, offensive or dangerous nature
- Students must maintain appropriate relationships amongst participants and others they come in contact with during any trips. On residential trips, students should confine themselves to their rooms and communal areas identified by staff accompanying the group
- Students are advised not to bring valuable items in their personal belongings on visits or trips. If it is necessary to bring such items they must accept responsibility for the security of such items as with their other personal belongings
- Students should respect all members of the group and afford equality of opportunity to all participants
- Students must complete the tasks as required and understand that opportunities to complete work may not arise on return to the College
- As ambassadors for Portadown College students should demonstrate good manners and conduct themselves in such a way that their general behaviour promotes enjoyment for all
- Show respect to the teacher(s), fellow students, spectators, visitors and other participants/attendees through courteous language
- Refrain from the use of offensive and/or abusive language
- Failure to observe these guidelines may result in sanctions being applied
- Regarding a student's compliance with the College Code of Conduct, a student may be removed from the trip/visit at the discretion of the Principal or another member of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team). Students and parents should be aware that in such an instance it will not be possible to refund any payments made
- In the event of a student being unable to attend a trip, parents/carers must inform the school office before the time of departure
- If the member of staff in charge considers it necessary for a student to be sent home during an educational visit or trip due to a breach of the Code of Conduct, any costs incurred must be met by the parents/carers

PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS

Disciplinary measures are taken within the context of the College's pastoral system and the support of Year Heads is sought as the need arises. The rules for good behaviour, punctuality, appearance etc. are designed to create the conditions for a harmonious College community and it is the responsibility of each student to know and abide by these rules. We recognise, however, that there will be occasions when breaches of good order will occur and that some students will seek to contravene College rules and accepted patterns of behaviour. Consequently, there is a set of procedures and sanctions for dealing with such offences. At each stage it will be made clear to students why they are being sanctioned and that a record is kept of their conduct.

Classroom behaviour

- Warnings and/or verbal reprimand
- Where the quality of the work presented is clearly below the student's potential, repeated or extra work may be given
- Departmental Detention - if a student fails to attend, the detention will be carried over and their failure to attend will be recorded
 - Failure to attend on two occasions without a legitimate reason will lead to an after school detention
 - When a student has a clash of detentions on the same day, it is their responsibility to notify the teacher whose detention they will be unable to attend and to serve the detention at the next opportunity provided by the teacher
 - Where a student fails to notify the teacher concerned, this will be recorded as a missed detention. If a student accrues four lunchtime detentions in one subject, they will be placed in an after school detention or put on the Review and Support Programme as deemed appropriate by the Head of Department.

- Referral to Head of Department
- Referral to Year Head – to be placed on daily/weekly report. At this stage parents/carers may be contacted
- Referral to Vice Principal in charge of behaviour – again parents/carers may be contacted.
- Friday afternoon detention – this is for serious or persistent breaches of Code of Conduct and only under exceptional circumstances, at a parental request, may be deferred until the next available detention.
- Referral to the Principal – this is for very serious and/or persistent breaches of the Code of Conduct, or a refusal to undertake the sanction issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct. At this stage the student may face suspension or expulsion.
- Students guilty of very serious behaviour matters e.g. vandalism, breaches of the College Drugs Policy and physical assault will be referred directly to the Principal and parents/carers will be informed. At this stage the student may face suspension or expulsion and the PSNI may also be informed as the need arises.

In the case of a student experiencing serious emotional and behavioural difficulties, an individual education and care plan will be drawn up. Where necessary, advice and assistance will be sought from the Education Authority Behaviour Support Team and/or other external agencies.

Study Rooms

Misbehaviour will be dealt with by the teacher in charge. If a student is referred to a Year Head, a Tuesday detention may be imposed. If poor behaviour persists, the student will be referred to a Vice Principal. Absence from study rooms without permission will lead to a Tuesday lunchtime detention. Any repeat of such absence will result in a Friday after school detention.

Tuesday* Lunch-time Detention in Sixth Form Centre

This lasts from 1.20pm to 1.45pm during which time students must complete private study. A failure to bring materials for private study will require the student to copy out the Code of Conduct. Students in detention will be expected to bring a packed lunch on that day and consume it prior to 1:20pm. This detention will be used for the following breaches of the Code of Conduct:

- Failure to observe the rules with respect to appearance
- Inappropriate behaviour in class
- Inappropriate behaviour in locker areas, toilets and canteen
- Congregating with others in toilets to engage in inappropriate behaviour
- Use of canteen/water dispensers at any time outside of break or lunchtime
- Visiting lockers at any time outside of break or lunchtime
- Use of mobile phones at any time outside of break or lunchtime
- Failure to attend assembly
- Any other circumstance as deemed appropriate by a Year Head or member of SLT.

A repeated breach of the Code of Conduct in these areas may result in a Friday detention being imposed. Failure to turn up or arriving late for Tuesday detention without a legitimate excuse on two occasions, or accumulating four Tuesday lunchtime detentions will result in Friday after school detention.

Friday* Afternoon College Detention in the Library

This lasts from 3.45-5.00pm and students are expected to bring materials for private study. A parent/carer may not refuse to give consent to a student's detention provided that the detention is reasonable and that 24 hours' notice in writing is given that the detention is due to take place. Some offences may incur more than one Friday detention. When a student fails to attend detention, an additional after school detention will be issued.

In the event of a parent/carer refusing to give consent or a failure on the part of the student to observe a detention, the Principal may impose a suspension (see below). This suspension would be in substitution for the detention and, once served, the detention would not thereafter be on the record. It would be replaced on the student's record by the suspension.

It is at the discretion of the Principal or Vice Principal to interview any student who has accrued a number of Friday detentions over a short period of time or those students who repeatedly breach the Code of Conduct. Notes may be kept of these interviews for future reference.

**Please note that if students are following a reduced timetable in College due to the COVID-19 situation, the Tuesday and Friday detentions may be moved to different days of the week. Parents/carers will always be provided with 24 hours' notice of these detentions.*

Suspension/Expulsion

If there is an exceptional breach of discipline or repeated failure to observe the College's Code of Conduct, the Principal may suspend a student. In all cases concerning suspension the parents/carers, the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Education Authority (EA) will be informed. Where expulsion is considered the matter will be referred directly to the Board of Governors and EA as required.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS

A good relationship between home and the College is pivotal to the well-being and academic progress of students. Parents/carers are asked to ensure:

- Their son/daughter is at College on time each day
- Notes/ responses to Truancy Call texts are provided for any absence within 5 days of the date of return
- They make regular contact with Year Heads or Heads of Department if they have any concerns or queries.
- They attend any meetings requested by College staff.

Parent-teacher interviews are scheduled in the College Calendar but contact with a teacher is welcome at any time through the College Office.

Parents/carers will be contacted either by telephone, letter or e-mail (ParentMail) regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct or other issues causing concern. Parental support of the College's procedures is expected but Year Heads, or in more serious matters, the Vice Principal in charge of Behaviour Management will be happy to meet with parents/carers about contentious issues.

Should you have a complaint, the College complaints procedure should be followed.

SCHOOL POLICIES

All school policies, including those relating to the Code of Conduct, can be requested from the school office or viewed on the College website: www.portadowncollege.com

This Policy was approved at a meeting of the Board of Governors on 29 June 2020.