



Disciplinary Code for Students

Introduction

The purpose of a code of discipline within Saint Patrick's College is to ensure that the pursuit of the objectives of the College shall not be disrupted. These are primarily the advancement, promotion, gathering and dissemination of knowledge and understanding through research, teaching, learning and rational discussion. To enable these aims to be fulfilled in a satisfactory manner it is necessary that a suitable academic environment be maintained. A code of discipline is a positive thing, which promotes concern and respect for people's rights and property. This helps to enhance the quality of life for all members of the College community - staff and students. A student who registers for any course in the College shall be expected to accept these objectives and to observe the rules and regulations of the College.

A Committee of Discipline exists to help maintain good discipline within the College and its general environs.

The Code of discipline and its implementation are subject to the present Statutes of the College and to amendment by the College authorities. The Code of Discipline is subject to review at such intervals and in such manner as the College authorities consider appropriate.

Rules and Breaches

The two basic rules of the Code of Discipline are:

1. Every student is expected and required to respect the rights of fellow students and the authority of the College academic and other staff in the performance of their duties. At all times every student is expected to observe the rules and regulations of the College and conduct themselves in a manner conducive to the academic environment of the College and the promotion of its objectives.
2. Every student is expected and required to respect the rights of fellow students in the enjoyment of the facilities of the College, including its clubs and societies, and all privileges in relation to those facilities, and to observe applicable rules or regulations and at all times to respect the property of the College or of other students, members of the College staff or other persons working in or visiting the College.

In interpreting the two basic rules the Committee of Discipline would normally regard as serious offences against the code such examples as:

- Plagiarism, cheating or the use of unauthorised material during an examination or other breaches of examination Regulations. Breaches of the Examination Regulations shall be dealt with directly by Officers of the College. (See section on Plagiarism following).
- Disruption of teaching, study, research or administration of the College.
- Obstruction of members of the College administrative staff, academic staff, officers, students or servants of the College in the performance of their duties.
- Furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive or in circumstances calculated to deceive.
- Forging, alteration, or misuse of College documents, records or identity cards.
- Intimidation or harassment of any kind, physical abuse or verbal abuse of a defamatory character of another person.
- Malicious or reckless damage or theft of College property or any other property on the College grounds. Misuse of College property including library materials or private property on the campus.

- Forcible occupation of College buildings or grounds.
- Unwarranted interference with the College's safety equipment, fire fighting equipment, security systems and alarm systems.
- On or off-campus conduct likely to bring the College into disrepute.
- Engaging in activities that contravene the laws of the State, and infringe either of the College's two basic rules of discipline.
- Refusal to produce a Student Identity Card when requested to do so by a College Staff member who shall identify himself / herself.
- Failure to pay a fine or comply with a disciplinary sanction imposed for a breach of discipline (subject to any right of appeal applicable).
- A serious failure to comply with the regulations governing the use of College Computer services (Code of Conduct for users of Computing Facilities listed below) and Library services which, in the case of a breach of Library Regulations, has not been dealt with by the librarian in accordance with the terms of those regulations.

Membership of the Committee of Discipline

The Committee of Discipline shall comprise:

- Dean of the Faculty of Theology or his delegate
- Two members of the Faculty elected by the Council of the Faculty
- One of the two student representatives on the Council of the Faculty of Theology.

Academic members are elected for a period of three years, student representatives for a period of one year.

The Dean or his delegate shall be the Chairman of the Committee and one member of the Faculty shall be the Secretary. Three members, one at least of whom must be a student representative, shall constitute a quorum. Should a meeting duly called fail to have a quorum because no student representative is in attendance, then the proposed meeting may proceed within a reasonable time, provided that three committee members are in attendance. An agenda will be circulated in advance of Committee meetings and its deliberations will be kept in confidence. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

Procedure

It is open to any staff or student member of the College community to report in writing any alleged breach of discipline to the Chairman of the Committee of Discipline. If an allegation of a serious breach of the Code has been made against a student, the President of the College or his nominee shall have the power to exclude that student from College premises, if he deems fit, while the alleged breach of discipline is being investigated.

The Chairman of the Committee of Discipline is empowered to handle summarily what he regards as minor breaches of the Code of Discipline. In cases where he adjudges the alleged breach to be of a serious character he shall refer the issue in writing to the Committee of Discipline at the earliest convenient opportunity.

An appeal from a decision by the Chairman of the committee of Discipline shall be to the Committee of Discipline (excluding the Chairman). The appeal procedure shall apply to such an appeal only to the extent relevant. A reasonable effort must be made to inform the student in writing of the alleged breach:

- Detailing the nature of the allegation, and any grounds on which it has been made
- Informing the student of his / her rights and
- Inviting him / her to attend a meeting of the Committee of Discipline convened to deal with the allegation, and to make such representations in relation to the allegation as he or she sees fit.

The student is entitled to have present to assist him / her at the meeting a representative who is a registered student or a member of the academic or administrative staff of the College.

The College or the student in question may have a legal adviser present at the meeting, subject to prior notice having been given to the student or the Committee as the case may be. If a student fails to respond to such an invitation, and / or to present himself or herself at the meeting, the matter may be dealt with in his / her absence.

If a member of the Committee of Discipline is a complainant or is otherwise involved in the alleged breach of conduct, he / she shall be replaced at the meeting by a nominee of the President of the College. The Committee, having considered the allegation, the evidence received in relation to it, and any representations made by or on behalf of the student, and made such enquiries as it sees fit, shall deliberate in private and shall notify the student of the outcome within three days, where practicable. The Committee shall forward a written report of its

handling of any serious breach of conduct to the President and, in the event of an appeal, following the expiry of that appeal, to the Dean of the appropriate Faculty.

Where a Head of Department or the Head of Security (hereinafter referred to as “the Relevant Head”) becomes aware of a breach of the Code of Discipline of the type described below, he or she may elect not to refer the breach to the Committee of Discipline where: in his / her opinion,

- the breach is such that it could appropriately be dealt with by the Relevant Head
- the student has admitted the breach of the Code, and confirmed in writing that he or she wishes to have the matter dealt with by the Relevant Head.

The Relevant Head shall promptly inform the Chairman of the committee of Discipline that he or she is dealing with such a breach. The disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed by a relevant head are confined to a fine not exceeding €64, campus service up to 5 hours, a reprimand, warning or advice, and repay compensation for loss or damage caused.

In deciding what disciplinary sanction will apply, the Relevant Head will ensure that the student is informed of the full case against him / her, and offer the student an opportunity to explain any mitigating circumstances to the Relevant Head. A written summary of the facts of, and the decision taken, in any such case will be supplied to the Chairman of the Committee of Discipline. An appeal from a decision by the Relevant head shall be to the Chairman of the Committee of Discipline, and the appeal procedures shall apply to such an appeal only to the extent relevant.

Disciplinary Sanctions

The Committee of Discipline may recommend to the President that the following sanctions be imposed upon a student who has been found in breach of discipline.

- *Expulsion* - that the student ceases to be a member of the College and that he / she be barred from any property occupied by the College. This penalty shall appear on the student’s record permanently.
- *Withdrawal* - that the student be requested to withdraw from the College permanently or for a stated period, or until he / she has complied with the requirements laid down by the Committee.
- *Suspension* - that the student be suspended from the College, or be barred from certain activities for a stated period, or until he / she has complied with the requirements laid down by the Committee, or the Relevant Head.
- *Fine* - that the student be fined a sum determined by the Committee or the Relevant Head.
- *Campus Service* - that the student be required to carry out a period of service on the College Campus of a nature and on such terms as are determined by the Committee or the Relevant Head
- *Reprimand* - that the student be reprimanded and warned that if further breaches of discipline occur in future his / her present breach would be taken into consideration by the Committee or the Relevant Head in making a decision.
- *Conditional Discharge* - that no further action be taken against the student, provided he / she fulfils the conditions laid down by the Committee. The Committee reserves the right to impose conditions involving compensation in the case of damage to property or persons. The Committee may also give an absolute discharge. Save as provided above, any sanction imposed shall appear on the student’s record for such period of time as the Committee may decide.

Appeal Procedure

A student who is aggrieved by a decision of the Committee of Discipline shall have the right of appeal to the President of the College. The President may, at his discretion, nominate an Appeal Committee of three people to conduct an inquiry into the appeal. An Appeal Committee shall consist of two nominees of the President, one of whom must be a member of the academic staff. A third member shall be a student, nominated by the President of the Student’s Union. The appointment of an appeal Committee shall be notified to the student in question. No member of the Committee of Discipline which made the appealed decision shall be a member of an Appeal Committee.

Appeals must be brought within twenty eight days of the date of service of the original decision. References below to the appellate authority are to the President, or where he decides that an appeal will be dealt with by an Appeal Committee, the Appeal Committee. Appeals will not normally involve a rehearing of the evidence but arrangements must be made for written submissions, appearing in person and / or producing fresh evidence.

The student shall convey in writing to the appellate authority the grounds of the appeal and any relevant evidence supportive of the case for appeal. The aggrieved student may also represent his / her case in person to the appellate authority, and may be accompanied by a registered student or by a member of the academic or administrative staff of the College. The College or student may have a legal adviser present subject to prior notice having been given to the student or the appellate authority.

The appellate authority may affirm, reverse or vary any decision of the Committee of Discipline, or remit the case to the Committee of Discipline for reconsideration. The decision arrived at through the appeals procedure shall be final.