



St. Mary's Secondary School Macroom
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CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This Code of Behaviour is effective on and from August, 2023. This Code has been prepared in accordance with “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools”, NEWB, May 2008 and the school’s Mission Statement. It was developed in conjunction with Students, Teachers, Parents and the Board of Management.

The policy applies to all students and relates to all school activities both during and outside school hours. It also applies where a student is clearly identifiable as a student of St Mary’s Secondary School and her conduct reflects unfavourably on the good name of the school.

Parents are made aware of the code prior to the registration of their daughter in the school in compliance with Section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Registration and admission of students into the school is conditional on parents’ giving a written undertaking that they find this Code of Behaviour acceptable and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their daughter. The Code of Behaviour applies to all students up to the completion of senior cycle education.

In accordance with the Age of Majority Act, 1985 the school recognises that a student aged 18 or over is an adult and has the capacity to enter contracts and make decisions affecting her legal and other rights.

The Code of Behaviour is posted on the school’s website. A hard copy is available on request.

Students will be made familiar with the code in the following ways: Induction sessions at the beginning of each academic year, weekly assemblies, through subject teachers, the student journal and regular intercom announcements.

Rationale

The purpose of the Code of Behaviour is to provide the whole school community with mutual expectations which are conducive to best learning and teaching, as well as preserving the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community.

Vision

A secure learning environment with positive respectful relationships is a vision of the school. The School’s Code of Behaviour helps to build that environment and those connections, where expectations and the reasons for them are explained and discussed regularly.



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School's Mission Statement

Our school's Code of Behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others and for our environment so that a positive and co-operative atmosphere prevails for all those who learn and work in our school community.

This policy is underpinned by our Mission Statement, where our school aims to:

- Provide a grounding in the Catholic faith inspired by Christian values and the Mercy ethos.
- Educate and inspire students in a secure learning community with positive respectful relationships.
- Ensure that diversity is welcomed and individuality is embraced.
- Create an atmosphere which instils a lifelong love of learning and discovery.
- Provide a well rounded education where effort is acknowledged and each student is challenged to realise their full potential in all aspects of school life.
- Foster student wellbeing and resilience.
- Promote an appreciation of the environment and sustainable living.
- Support the holistic development and wellbeing of all our staff.

The Code of Behaviour has also been developed in tandem with the goals outlined in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools", NEWB, May 2008. These include:

- creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour,
- creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning,
- encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour,
- helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens,
- building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents,
- ensuring that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.



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Mutual Expectations

The school is very pleased to acknowledge the long tradition of very good behaviour by the student population.

The school's expectations of conduct for students are as follows:

1. Students are expected to be **RESPECTFUL, COURTEOUS** and well-mannered to teaching/non-teaching staff, and to other students at all times. This includes listening to others, being considerate of others and behaving in a polite manner towards others.
2. Students are expected to treat school property and the personal property of others with due respect. Furniture including desks, chairs and lockers are the property of the school and need to be used by students in a responsible and mature manner.
3. Students are expected to apply themselves diligently to their work at all times and to engage in extra and co-curricular activities in order to realise their full potential.
4. Students are expected to support the sustainable living initiatives in the school.

Recognition of Good Behaviour

The school's culture is such that good behaviour is seen as the norm. Recognition of high standards is embedded in our communication with students both individually and in groups.

To this end, the following measures happen regularly :

1. Teaching staff give frequent and informal recognition of good behaviour to individual students and groups of students.
2. Groups of students are commended on the intercom and at weekly assemblies.
3. Year Heads organise rewards on occasions for individual students/groups in respect of particularly positive behaviour.
4. Verbal praise is communicated to parents at Parents Teacher Meetings and other school events.
5. Written praise is communicated to parents in Christmas and Summer Reports.
6. Recognition is given at the annual Catherine McAuley awards ceremony



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Approach to Learning

The school will endeavour to provide a range of programmes to meet the needs of the students in its care. In addition, it will offer a broad range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to support the holistic development of the student body.

All students experience success, and consequently high self esteem when they apply themselves to their academic work and engage in opportunities provided for them.

Good learning and teaching takes place when :

- Students present for class with the required books, copies and/or other materials
- Students are attentive in class
- Students actively engage with the teacher
- Students ask questions of the teacher when they don't understand
- Everyone is respectful of the student/teacher who is speaking
- Students participate fully in experiential learning in paired and/or group work
- The opinion of every student and teacher is respected
- All homework is completed to the best of the students ability and on time
- Students do not eat/drink in class (with the exception of water)

Above all, a respectful environment is paramount to quality learning and teaching.

Support for Students

The school recognises and appreciates that most students behave appropriately. Subject teachers and Year Heads are best positioned to provide advice and direction to students when minor misbehaviour needs to be addressed.

Students who might need additional help or specialised support in adhering to the Code of Behaviour will be supported by the school in doing so, through the schools' pastoral system.

Where necessary, support services outside the school may be contacted to provide more specialised assistance to students in managing their behaviour.



Attendance

Full school attendance is expected to ensure that students can reach their full potential in all aspects of school life.

1. The school uses the vsware computerised system to record students' attendance and punctuality.
2. Subject teachers record school attendance twice daily ie 9am and 2pm on the vs ware system.
3. The school will send a text message to a parent's mobile phone stating that his/her daughter has failed to register attendance in school following the 9am and 2pm register.
4. All absences must be explained in writing by parents by means of an Absence Request on the the vsware app.
5. Students who arrive late for school are asked to report to the Principal/Deputy Principal/School Secretary immediately upon arrival. Late arrivals need to be explained on vsware app by a parent/guardian.
6. Disciplinary sanctions up to and including detention may be given to a student who fails to comply with these procedures.
7. Parents may access their daughter's attendance record on the school's vs ware system.

The Education Welfare Act 2002 specifies that the names of students who are absent for twenty days or more in any one school year must be reported to TUSLA. The school is obliged to provide Tusla with reasons for students' absence. The Act also stipulates that parents/guardians will be held responsible for explaining their daughter's absence to them.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be in attendance by 8.55 a.m. on each school day and to be punctual for every class throughout the day. Year Heads will monitor punctuality and may impose sanctions up to and including detention for repeat breaches of this regulation.

Procedures to be followed by students leaving school during the day:

It is a strongly held view of the school authorities that students should not leave school during the school day. All medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours, where possible. If in exceptional circumstances, a student has to leave school during the day, the following procedures must be followed :

1. Parents will communicate their daughter's absence from classes through the vs ware absence request.
2. Junior students need to be collected from the school by a parent/guardian, while senior students who have presented a permission request may be allowed to leave the school on their own.



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3. In all cases, the student must check in with the Principal/Deputy Principal before leaving the building. If the Principal/Deputy Principal are not available, the student must inform a teacher that they are leaving the school.

The following are procedures to be followed by students in other specific circumstances:

Students should communicate with the Principal/Deputy Principal or school office if feeling unwell. Communication will be made with a parent/guardian to make the necessary arrangements for the student to go home.

If a student for some exceptional reason is not studying a subject on the curriculum, she will be assigned a classroom and a subject teacher who will supervise her. It is expected that she will be present for roll call and work quietly.

It is a tradition of the school that senior students (i.e. fourth, fifth and sixth year students) at the discretion of the school may be permitted to leave the school at lunchtime. A consent note from a parent presented to the Year Head at the beginning of fourth year will be necessary.



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Uniform and Dress Code

St Mary's Secondary School expects its students to take pride in representing their school by wearing a full clean school uniform on a daily basis.

The school uniform consists of the following:

1. Navy Blue skirt for senior students and navy/green tartan skirt for junior students
2. Navy trousers with pale green stripe
3. White shirt
4. Navy school jumper with crest
5. Black shoes (with black soles) or navy boat shoes.
6. Navy tights
7. School jacket.

The PE Uniform is as follows:

White polo shirt (No logos).

Plain navy tracksuit ends (No stripes).

Runners.

Students are required to wear their full school, before and after matches during the school day.

All students are expected to comply in full with the school's uniform and dress code. Uniform and dress code will be monitored on a daily basis and sanctions up to and including detention may be imposed for breaches in this regard.



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Health and Safety

The BOM will take every reasonable measure to ensure that school buildings, fittings and equipment are maintained in proper order.

All students have particular responsibilities for maintaining the areas used by them in a neat and tidy condition, particularly their base classrooms and communal areas e.g. toilets, canteen and corridors.

Students are required to follow all instructions given by school authorities to ensure health and safety for all. The attention of students is drawn, in particular, to instructions that apply in the following areas: Science laboratories, Home Economics Room, Art Room, canteen, Sports areas and corridors.

For hygiene reasons, students must wear gloves during Home Economics class if they are wearing nail varnish or have acrylic nails.

In the interests of safety, students are not allowed to go into specialist rooms unsupervised.

For health and safety reasons, only tippex mouse is allowed. Chewing gum is not permitted.



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School Property and Personal Property

Students are responsible for the safe-keeping of their personal property and respecting other peoples' personal property.

The school will assist by providing a locker to each student. The key to each locker is the responsibility of the student. Any damage to or loss of locker/lock caused by a student will result in a financial charge being imposed upon the student.

In the case of a student being identified as having defaced or damaged school property, she may be expected to pay the cost of repair and/restoration.

All personal items, including school jackets should be clearly labelled. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss of, damage to or theft of students' personal property.

Physical Environment

The management, caretaker and cleaning staff make every possible effort to prepare the school to a very high standard for students at the beginning of each academic year. Students are expected to cooperate and engage with staff in maintaining those high standards by keeping classrooms and common areas clean and tidy at all times. Due care needs to be taken of school grounds including the path to the PE Hall.

Bullying

St Mary's Secondary School operates a zero tolerance approach to Bullying. See School's Anti Bullying policy.

Use of mobile phones by students in school.

The school's Mobile Phone policy is regularly reviewed by the Board of Management. Refer to the Mobile Phone Policy for details.

Acceptable Use Policy

See the school's Acceptable Use Policy regarding the use of electronic devices and any internet enabled device.

School Trips/Tours

The behavioural track record of students wishing to go on school trips/ tours may be taken into consideration, before permission is granted prior to the time the trip/tour departs.



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Forbidden/Illegal Substances

Students are forbidden to smoke or be in possession of e-cigarettes (vapes) on the school premises, in uniform or during a school-related activity. Any student in breach of this regulation will face suspension from school.

The consumption, possession and/or supply of alcohol is forbidden in the school, on its grounds or during all school-related activities. Breaches of this regulation will result in suspension from school and referral to the BOM.

The consumption, possession and/or supply of illegal substances is forbidden in the school, on its grounds, or during all school-related activities. Breaches of this regulation may result in sanctions up to and including expulsion.

Any student who fails to adhere to the above rules governing alcohol and illegal substances on a trip/tour outside the school may be sent home immediately. Parents/guardians will be responsible for putting the necessary arrangements in place for the student's return home.

These regulations are required to protect the health and safety of the whole school community. See Appendix 1 for more specific details on sanctions.

Home/School Contact

Students' behaviour may be discussed at the annual Parent-Teacher Meeting and/or at any time during the school year on an appointment basis or over the phone.

The school will use the opportunity presented by information meetings e.g. induction and other meetings to keep parents informed about the Code of Behaviour.



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School Discipline

The school's code of behaviour is based on the core value of respect for self, others and property.

Responsibility for the implementation of this core value rests, in the first instance, with each individual Subject Teacher. Should cases of indiscipline be persistent or serious in nature, the Subject Teacher will report to the Year Head, who can sanction up to and including detention/Student Progress Card. The Year Head may, in turn, refer serious or persistent matters to the Principal for more detailed consideration.

The principle of restorative practice may be used in conjunction with the sanctions listed below to address misdemeanours. This practice allows for positive relationships to be strengthened and sustained. Through the development of empathy and the process of understanding different perspectives, students can learn to respect and empathise with each other, both in the expression of their thoughts and their feelings.

An example of the questions which may be used are outlined below, when applying restorative practice to an incident :

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking of at the time?
3. What have you thought about it since?
4. Who has been affected and in what way?
5. How could things have been done differently?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?



Sanctions

While restorative practice may be employed, sanctions are also used in the school as a positive intervention in the management of behaviour, to defuse and not escalate a situation, as well as to preserve the dignity of all parties. Sanctions are timely and applied in a fair and consistent way.

Expectations, rationale for expectations and possible sanctions for misdemeanours are outlined in Appendix 2

The sanction(s) when applied, are dependent on the seriousness of the offence, the student's previous record and any other factors deemed to be relevant. The following sanctions may be applied by teachers, Year Heads and/or Senior Management :

- verbal warning
- written entry in the Student's Diary
- removal of privileges
- Homework/Behaviour Card - discussion
- phone call to parents/guardians
- carrying out a useful task in school
- referral for detention (lunch time or After School)
- Referral to the Year Head
- Removal from the classroom/area
- Student Progress Card
- Referral to the Principal
- Disciplinary meeting with parents
- Suspension (In - House or Out of School)
- Expulsion

Explanation of Sanctions

Verbal Warning

A teacher corrects a student verbally in or outside of the classroom

Written entry in the Student's Diary

A teacher communicates a written message to a parent/guardian outlining their daughter's behaviour.

Removal of Privileges

A student is not granted permission to engage in a specific activity/activities outside the curriculum eg going down town at lunch time for senior students.

Homework/Behaviour Card

A student may be put on a Homework/General Behaviour Card for a specified period of time. See Appendix 3



Phone Call to parents/guardians

A phone call is made to parents/guardians by a teacher, Year Head, Principal/Deputy Principal.

Carrying out a useful task in school

A student may be asked to engage in a service to the school community e.g. tidying noticeboards, litter picking.

Referral for Detention

Detention of students at lunchtime or after school is considered to be a serious sanction that can be imposed for behavioural reasons.

Parents will receive written notification of a detention on the vsware app of the date of such detention. Any appeal against a detention should be addressed to the Year Head.

If a student due for detention is absent on the day of a detention, as verified by the vsware system, notice of an alternative date will be sent to parents. Failure to attend detention without adequate explanation, following investigation by the Year Head, will lead to the consideration of more serious sanctions.

Referral to the Year Head

Subject teachers and/or other school personnel may refer a student to the relevant Year Head at any time, who will speak to the student about the misdemeanour.

Removal from the classroom/area

A student may be asked to leave the classroom/area and go to another class/supervised area eg another classroom.

Student Progress Card

A Year Head may put a student who is consistently behaving inappropriately on a Student Report Card, for a period of one week.

Subject teachers will insert a written comment in the Report Card at the end of each class. Reference may be made to the student's level of preparation for class, including homework, engagement with work and general behaviour.

The student will be asked to write a short written reflection on her behaviour at the end of the day. See Appendix 4.

Referral to the Principal

A student may be called by the Principal for a meeting with him.



Disciplinary Meeting with parents/guardians.

The school may ask parents/guardians of a student to a meeting about their daughter's behaviour at any time on an appointment basis.

Suspension

Suspension is defined as a sanction requiring the student to absent herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- 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.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for automatic suspension e.g. assault, smoking, vaping or possession of /drinking alcohol.

In considering a term of suspension, the following factors will be relevant:

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date.
5. Whether suspension is a proportionate response.
6. The possible impact of suspension.

One of two types of suspension may be employed as a sanction.

In House Suspension

An In - House Suspension involves the student attending school, but without permission to join her classes for tuition for a maximum period of one day.

Exercises are assigned to the student, based on the principles of restorative practice. The goal is to give a student time to reflect on the nature and consequences of her misdemeanour, with a view to making more appropriate choices in the future.

Out of School Suspension

The BOM has delegated the power to suspend a student from school for a maximum of 3 days to the Principal. With the approval of the Chairperson of the BOM, a suspension of 4 or 5 days may be imposed by the Principal. A suspension in excess of 5 days and for not more than 10 days can only be imposed by the BOM.



Additionally, any suspension that would bring the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more must be formally reviewed by the BOM.

Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice will be followed by the school when proposing to suspend a student, as follows:

- The right to be heard.

The Principal will inform the student and her parents in writing of the complaint, how and by whom it will be investigated. The student and her parents will be given an opportunity to reply to the Principal's letter within 5 working days before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

- The right to impartiality.

This requires that the investigation of a complaint is separated from the decision making process. The Principal will arrange for a member/members of staff to conduct an investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case, as well as any other relevant information, to the Principal. Based on the information received, the Principal will then decide whether to impose suspension on a student.

If a suspension is imposed, the Principal will notify the student and her parents in writing of a decision to suspend. Such a letter will confirm the period of suspension and reason/s for it as well as the right of appeal.

A suspension will not be served while an appeal is being processed except in the case of behaviour that endangers members of the school community.

Expulsion

Expulsion will only be resorted to by the BOM in the most extreme cases of indiscipline and only after every effort at rehabilitation has failed and every other sanction has been exhausted. Any decision of the BOM to expel a student may be appealed under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, as explained below.

The following behaviours, however, may be grounds for automatic expulsion, even if for a first offence, and after following due process and fair procedures:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
- Violence or physical assault.
- Possession of illegal drugs in the school
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault.

In considering the expulsion of a student, the following factors will be relevant:

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.



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2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date.
5. Whether expulsion is a proportionate response.
6. The possible impact of expulsion.

Summary of procedures in respect of expulsion:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal which will allow for the student and her parents to be given every opportunity to respond to the alleged misbehaviour.
2. A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal and the allowing of the parents to attend the relevant part of that BOM meeting and/or to make a written and/or oral submission to the BOM.
3. Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a special hearing to consider expelling a student.
4. BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing including the informing of parents and Tusla (if expulsion is being recommended).
5. Consultations arranged by Tusla – 20 days must be allowed for this stage.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The full procedures to be followed by the BOM in the case of expulsion are set out in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools", NEWB, May 2008.

Modification Clause

The BOM of this school reserves the right to modify the details of the Code of Behaviour at short notice in response to events or circumstances that were not foreseeable when the Code was being first drafted or subsequently reviewed. Written notification of such modification will be communicated to families prior to it becoming operational.



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Appeals Procedure

Under Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998:

- (a) the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, may appeal to the BOM against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,
- (b) grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under paragraph (a) of Section 29), shall be heard,
- (c) appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

Such an appeal may only be made following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school in accordance with Section 28.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, there are three contingencies in which the student (over 18) or the parent may appeal to the Secretary General of the DES, as follows:

- (i) where the Board permanently excludes a student from the school,
- (ii) where a student is suspended for a period of 20 days or more in one school year, (iii) where the school refuses to enrol a student.

Such an appeal may only be made following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school in accordance with Section 28.

Written records

Written records of students' behaviour and school performance are kept as a matter of policy. All records will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), 2018.



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Appendix 1

Sanctions for Forbidden and Illegal Substances

Smoking, E - Cigarettes (Vaping)	1 day suspension
Possession, consumption and/or supply of alcohol	3 days suspension
Possession, consumption and/or supply of illegal drugs	Sanction up to and including expulsion
Possession, consumption and/or supply of alcohol or illegal drugs on school trips/tours	Sent home immediately, sanction up to and including expulsion.



Appendix 2

Expectations, Rationale for Expectations and possible sanctions for misdemeanours.

Expectations	Rationale for Expectations	Misdemeanours	Sanctions
Full attendance in school, including adhering to signing in/out procedure.	<p>Full attendance is necessary for a student to fulfil her potential in all aspects of student life.</p> <p>Upholds and supports high standards of Health and Safety</p> <p>Protects the student(s) from a Child Protection perspective.</p>	Absent from class/school without permission, including failure to adhere to signing in/out procedure.	Up to and including In-House Suspension.
Adhere to safety regulations.	Upholds and supports high standards of Health and Safety	Not adhering to safety regulations.	Up to and including In-House Suspension.
Respect for students, staff and property.	<p>Respect for others and property helps to build a school culture based on trust, safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>Student success flourishes in a secure learning environment.</p>	Disrespectful behaviour towards students, staff and property. (eg. bullying, racism, discrimination, physical violence, meanness, swearing, theft, rudeness, graffiti, vandalism). Note this list is not exhaustive.	<p>Up to and including Suspension/ Expulsion.</p> <p>In the case of damage to school property, the student will be asked to pay the cost of repair/ replacement.</p>
Present homework and be prepared for all classes, including specialist subjects.	<p>Helps students to manage deadlines, prepare for exams and learn valuable life skills.</p> <p>Upholds and supports high standards of Health and Safety</p>	Failure to present homework repeatedly and failure to have specialist requirements for class eg Art, PE, Home Economics, Music.	Up to and including detention/Student Progress Card.



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Wear full school uniform, including PE uniform.	A school uniform worn correctly promotes high standards of personal presentation which increases self-esteem and self-worth, while raising the profile of the student and the school they represent. A school uniform creates a safe learning environment which reduces disparities among students.	Incorrect Uniform, including incorrect PE uniform.	Up to and including detention.
Fully engage in classes.	A productive classroom environment promotes a healthy work ethic, which contributes to all students fulfilling their full potential.	Creating a disturbance in class.	Up to and including detention.

In the case of multiple breaches or extremely serious misbehaviour, the school authorities reserve the right to impose more severe sanctions up to and including expulsion.



Appendix 3

Homework/General Behaviour Card

Name of Student _____ - Date _____

5- Excellent, 4-Very Good, 3-Satisfactory, 2-Poor, 1- Unacceptable.

	Homework carefully completed to student's ability	General behaviour and willingness to learn	Additional Comments	Teacher's Signature
9.00				
9.40				
10.20				
11.15				
11.55				



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12.35				
2.00				
2.40				
3.20				

Student Reflection



Appendix 4

Student Progress Card

Name of Student _____ - Date _____

5- Excellent, 4-Very Good, 3-Satisfactory, 2-Poor, 1- Unacceptable.

	Punctuality	Materials for Class	General Behaviour and willingness to learn	Homework fully completed to student's ability	Teacher's Signature
9.00					
9.40					
10.20					
11.15					
11.55					
12.35					
2.00					
2.40					
3.20					



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Student Reflection