

Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This policy was reviewed and redrafted in October 2016. A committee of five teachers was formed to audit the existing code. Two teachers from this group formed a working group of children to assist with the review and to provide input for the new revised code. Following this work the code was presented to the Board of Management for their input. Following this process, the draft policy was published on the school website and parents were given a two week period to examine the code and send feedback to the principal teacher. This feedback was then brought to the Board of Management for discussion. When feedback from all groups was received and the contents of the code agreed it was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2012.

RATIONALE

The code of behaviour was reviewed for the following reasons:

1. To help the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour.
2. To help teachers, other member of staff, pupils and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.
3. To foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.
4. To fulfil requirements specified in the Education Welfare Act, 2000 and to include the good practices set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

The school's mission statement states our strong commitment to *cherishing all pupils in a safe, secure attractive learning environment. Our ethos upholds the spiritual and moral values of the Catholic Church, whereby the dignity of each person is respected and honoured. To foster these values we believe a clearly agreed code of behaviour is extremely valuable and important.*

AIMS

1. To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission and vision statements
2. To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
3. To create an atmosphere of respect, empathy and trust
4. To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
5. To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community

6. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
7. To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The following strategies will be used in Scoil na Maighdine Muire to promote positive behaviour.

- Classroom rules displayed in all classrooms
- Provision of Social, Personal and Health Education lessons in all classes
- Rewards for good behaviour at class level
- Ongoing work from Brilliant Behaviour Committee (BBC) – Members of BBC to visit classrooms or to use intercom to remind children of school rules
- Discrete time devoted to positive behaviour lessons specifically designed for our school context e.g. walking on the right on corridors and on stairways, standing back at doorways to let others enter or exit.
- Standards of behaviour discussed at assemblies
- Affirming positive behaviour of children at meetings with parents
- Outlining importance of positive behaviour during registration evening in June each year
- Notice board in school hall showing notices relating to positive behaviour
- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A visit to another member of staff or the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some responsibility or privilege
- A mention to a parent – written or verbal
- Teacher records improvement in the behaviour of a disruptive pupil
- Implementation of S.P.H.E. Programmes such as Circle Time to promote positive behaviour.
- Use of www.classdojo.com to record positive and negative behaviour patterns

REWARDING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Each teacher will reward positive and appropriate behaviour as she/he feels is appropriate. Some suggested methods include:

1. Public and private praise of the pupil – in class or at assemblies
2. Award/prize/certificate for good/improved behaviour
3. Golden time
4. No homework
5. Stickers, badges or stamps in books/copies
6. Note home to inform parents of good behaviour
7. Phone call home
8. Send pupil to other member of staff for praise
9. Special privilege e.g. choosing an activity
10. Party

DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Every child has a right to an education but as with every right there is a responsibility. The child has a responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner to ensure:

1. The teacher can provide her/him with that education
2. Her/his behaviour does not prevent other children from receiving their education

Examples of inappropriate behaviour include:

1. Bullying
2. Endangering other people
3. Fighting
4. Spitting
5. Biting
6. Intimidating
7. Pushing
8. Hitting
9. Littering
10. Talking out of turn
11. Disrupting class
12. Speaking inappropriately to another person
13. Distracting others
14. Passing notes
15. Stealing
16. Failing to complete work to best of ability
17. Damaging property
18. Failure to comply with mobile phone policy

Procedures and Sanctions

In imposing a sanction, it is the inappropriate behaviour that is unacceptable and not the individual.

Sanctions will be, as far as possible, relevant to the inappropriate behaviour.

Participation in curriculum subjects e.g. Visual Arts, Physical Education will not be withdrawn from a child unless her/his behaviour in such a class or activity is a source of danger or disruption to herself or others.

A whole class will not be punished because of one child's/small group's inappropriate behaviour.

Step 1

When an incident of inappropriate behaviour occurs the following procedure is followed:

The class teacher/supervising teacher deals with the incident using the following procedure:

1. The teacher explains to the child why her behaviour is unacceptable
2. The child's seating arrangement may be changed and the child may be temporarily separated from the class group.
3. A note/comment may be written in the child's homework notebook to be signed by parents/guardians.
4. A pupil may be given a written assignment relating to her inappropriate behaviour to be signed by parent/guardians.
5. If a pupil's behaviour is a source of disruption or danger to her/him or others, she/he may be removed from the activity in which she/he is involved.
6. A pupil may be referred to the Principal
7. If a child damages, loses or steals school property, recompense is expected to be made by the pupil/parents/guardians for same.
8. The behaviour incident will be recorded by the teacher if she/he feels that it is significantly serious or if it is part of ongoing inappropriate behaviour.

If the incident occurs in the yard, the child will be corrected by the supervising teacher and separated from the other children if necessary. There is a designated area in both yards where a child will be sent to stand or sit for a short period of time if she/he is misbehaving:

Back yard – at door into main building

Front yard – at 'ramp door'

If the incident occurs during break time the child will be asked to stand or sit for a short period of time in a location where she can be supervised by the supervising teacher.

If the incident occurs in rooms 11, 12 and 13 during break time the child may be asked to stand or sit for a short period of time in the hallway where she/he can still be supervised the supervising teacher.

Significant incidents will be recorded by the supervising teacher on an incident report sheet. This will be signed by the supervising teacher and the principal. The class-teacher will be made aware of the incident and the report will be stored on the child's pupil file.

Step 2

If the sanctions at Step 1 fail to resolve the problem or if the teacher feels that the incident warrants it, she will request the parents/guardians of the child to meet with her/him to discuss the child's behaviour. The teacher will have a written record of the behaviour incident(s) to show the parents/guardians. The teacher will inform the principal of the behaviour issue and that a meeting with parents/guardians is taking place. The class teacher will write a report documenting the issues discussed at the meeting with the child's parents/guardians. This report will be stored on the child's pupil file. If the parents/guardians refuse to meet with the class-teacher the principal will be informed and step 3 of the process will be implemented. The class-teacher will record this on the pupil file.

Step 3

If the child continues to behave inappropriately or in the case of serious misbehaviour, the teacher and principal will meet the parents/guardians to inform them that their child's behaviour at school is inappropriate and unacceptable. If deemed appropriate by the principal and class teacher, a behaviour contract will be drawn up which all parties will be asked to sign and adhere to. Adherence to the behaviour contract will be monitored by the class-teacher and principal. The class-teacher, principal and parents/guardians will meet regularly along with the child to discuss adherence to the contract. Positive efforts to adhere to the contract will be affirmed.

The principal will inform parents/guardians that if the child fails to adhere to the behaviour contract the process will have to move to the next stage (stage 4). The principal or class-teacher will document the meeting and store records on the child's pupil file.

Step 4

If the procedures followed in stages 1 to 3 have proved unsuccessful and the child continues to behave in an inappropriate and unacceptable manner the principal teacher may decide to suspend the child. The procedures for suspension are outlined below.

SUSPENSION

The Board of Management (BoM) of Presentation Senior School has delegated this authority to the principal, for periods of up to three days. The BoM has also authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The BoM has placed a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. A decision to suspend will be taken only in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Immediate Suspension

The Board of Management of Presentation Senior School authorises the school principal to impose immediate suspensions in exceptional circumstances. Immediate suspension may be warranted in cases such as:

- The student's own safety is at risk due to her/his behaviour.
- The safety of the other children, staff or visitors to the school is compromised by the student's behaviour.
- The student is unable or unwilling to cease offensive behaviour after repeated requests from the school's teaching staff.
- Teaching and learning is severely interrupted by the student's behaviour

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. If the principal teacher is of the opinion that a student should be suspended immediately for reasons of safety she/he will notify the parents/guardians so that appropriate arrangements may be made for the collection of the student. The student will not be permitted to leave the school on her/his own. As soon as is practicably possible following the imposition of the period of suspension:

1. The principal, along with another member of staff, will carry out a formal investigation into the incident resulting in a decision being made to suspend the student immediately.
2. The principal will meet with the student's parents/guardians to discuss the incident and offer them an opportunity to respond.
3. The principal teacher will write to the parents to confirm the following:
 - a. The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
 - b. The reason for the suspension

- c. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
- d. The provision for appeal to the Board of Management
- e. The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.
- f. The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) will be notified if the total number of days reached is six.

The duration of a suspension imposed immediately will not exceed a period of three days.

The Board of Management will be notified of all instances of immediate suspension.

Procedure

The following procedure will be followed before a decision is made to suspend a pupil:

- An investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour. The Principal and at least one other adult will be involved in this investigation.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.

If a decision is made to suspend a child:

- The principal will notify the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:
 - The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
 - The reasons for the suspension.
 - Any study programme to be followed.
 - The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
 - The provision for appeal to the Board of management
 - The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
 - Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the NEWB will be notified.

Following a period of suspension, the parent/s will be required to give a satisfactory undertaking that the child will behave in accordance with the school's code of behaviour and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil on his/her return to school. Every effort will be made by the school to support the child in the process of re-integration.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity to make a fresh start on 'a clean slate'.

Records and reports.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process.
- The decision and rationale for the decision.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Step 5

EXPULSION

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to a student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student will only occur in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, National Council for Special Education)

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student 's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the school's Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code include:

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

Procedures in respect of expulsion.

Step 1 – A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- Inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This will also ensure that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged behaviour.

Parents and the student will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents will occur. It will provide the student and their parents with an opportunity to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also provide an opportunity for the school to explore with parents how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

If the pupil and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write to the parents advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of school authorities to make a decision to respond to inappropriate behaviour. The school will keep a copy of the letter written to parents in the pupil file.

Step 2 – A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The principal will:

1. Inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

2. Ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
3. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
4. Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
5. Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
6. Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

Step 3 --- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberation (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and the parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4 – Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate action.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion (Education Welfare Act 2000, s24(1)). The Board of Management will refer to the National Education Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The pupil will not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education Welfare Act 2000, s24(1))

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Education Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational

Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2997, s4A).

The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

Step 5 – Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a pupil should be expelled, the Education Welfare Officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the pupil to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. In the interests of educational welfare of the student, those concerned will come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

Pending these consultations about the pupil's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of the pupils is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a pupil during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6 --- Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification of the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. This task will be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal. Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will proceed. The pupil and their parents will be informed about the right to appeal and will be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge the appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student and stored on the student file. The decision will also be recorded in Board of Management minutes.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 Section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding the code. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents, class teacher, Learning Support/Resource Teacher and the Principal. Recommendations in psychological assessments will be taken into account when developing the behaviour plan. The school will maintain regular contact with parents in relation to the child's behaviour patterns. Children will be taught strategies to provide peer support to pupils with special educational needs in order to assist them to adhere to the school's code of behaviour. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times as the code of behaviour is implemented or followed.

Physical Intervention and Restraint

In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate when dealing with inappropriate pupil behaviour:

Risk to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors
Where there is a risk of serious damage to property

Staff will view physical intervention or restraint of pupils as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff at as early a stage as possible since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.

Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he will be released. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression.

Physical Intervention/Restraint Approaches which can be regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme cases using restrictive holds

Recording an incident

All incidents that result in non-routine interventions will be recorded in detail and stored on the pupil file. The class teacher, principal teacher and parents will be made aware of the incident.

REVIEW OF CODE

The code of discipline will be reviewed in the first term of each school year.

RATIFICATION

This code was ratified by the Board of Management on 24th January 2017