

Code of Behaviour

1. Introduction

The code of behaviour was reviewed after consultation with Parents, Pupils, Staff, and the Board of Management. The NEWB template 'Audit of School Code of Behaviour' was used to facilitate the review. The Education Welfare Act 2000 requires that codes of behaviour should specify:

- the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student;
- the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled;
- the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student;
- the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.

2. Aims

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents with regard to behavioural expectations, for all concerned with school life.
- To create an orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development
- To promote positive behaviour, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

3. Responsibilities and Rights

3.1 Teacher's Responsibilities & Rights:

- Teachers are expected to support and implement the school's code of behaviour. Rules to be taught and reinforced in class and at assembly. The school motto of 'be the best that you can be to be' to be emphasised.
- A key issue in this regard is that teachers should be cognisant of their duty of care and create a safe, welcoming environment for each pupil.
- Each teacher has the responsibility to develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil and in this regard the praising of desirable behaviour is essential.
- Every school is a learning organisation and therefore, teachers should facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential. This will entail recognising and providing for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Teachers are expected to be courteous, consistent and fair, to keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum and to deal appropriately

with misbehaviour. In this regard, teachers should listen, at appropriate times, to pupils' explanations for behaviour.

- Recording incidents of misbehaviour and patterns of behaviour are essential as is the communication of this data to relevant education partners. Therefore, teachers should keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of minor misbehaviour, communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.
- Teachers should also provide support for colleagues.
- Teachers, like all workers, have the right to expect to be treated with respect and dignity by pupils, parents, Board of Management and colleagues.
- They should be able to teach in a safe, well-maintained, physical environment, relatively free from disruption.
- They have the right to the support and co-operation of teaching colleagues, other school staff, parents and The Employee Assistance Service in order to achieve the school's aims and objectives.
- In the organisation of the school, teachers have the right to be listened to, and participate in decision-making which affects their own work and that of the school in general.
- Teachers also have the right to work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development, and to support and professional advice from Boards of Management, Department of Education, Tusla (formerly NEWB), National Council for Special Education and National Educational Psychological Service.
- In the event of decisions being taken that affect teachers adversely, they have the right to appeal in accordance with agreed procedures.

3.2 Pupils' Responsibilities & Rights:

- Pupils are required to attend school regularly and punctually, work quietly and safely when requested, and to the best of their ability at all times.
- Pupils must listen to their teachers and act on instructions / advice.
- Pupils are required to listen to other pupils and await their turn to speak.
- Pupils are required to show respect for all members of the school community and to respect the rights of other pupils to learn.
- Pupils must care for their own property and respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Given the central importance of health and safety in any school situation, pupils have a duty to avoid behaving in any way which would endanger themselves or others. In this regard, they may be required to remain seated at all times should their teacher not be in the room. Pupils must stay on school premises during school hours and stay within designated areas during break times.
- Pupils must treat others with dignity and respect and, therefore, they should avoid nasty remarks, swearing or name-calling and be inclusive of other pupils in games and activities.
- Pupils must contribute to good order around the school so requiring pupils to move quietly around the premises.
- Pupils must keep the school clean and tidy

- As the school is a learning organisation pupils have an age appropriate responsibility to bring the correct materials and books to school and follow school and class rules.
- All pupils have the right to expect to be treated fairly, consistently and with respect.
- They should be able to learn in a relatively disruption-free environment, safe from bullying and threats.
- Pupils' individual differences will be recognised and provision made for them.
- Pupils should have the right to be listened to, and to question, at appropriate times.
- As learners they should be allowed to make mistakes and to learn from them.
- They should have confidence that their positive behaviour will be affirmed and that misbehaviour will be dealt with appropriately.

3.3 Parents' and Guardians' Responsibilities & Rights

- Parents are expected to encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, for their own property and that of others.
- They should ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually and show interest in their children's school work.
- Part of supporting and encouraging children in their school work will entail ensuring that their children have the correct books and other materials.
- Parents must appreciate that when disputes occur between children the main aim is to resolve the issue rather than sanction a particular child (sanctions may of course be imposed).
- Parents have a responsibility to be familiar with the code of behaviour and other school policies such as a healthy eating policy and support their implementation.
- They are expected to co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others and to communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their children's progress / behaviour.
- Parents and Guardians have the right to expect to be treated with respect and to have a safe and welcoming environment provided for their child.
- Parents are entitled to expect that there will be a recognition of individual differences among pupils, having due regard for the resources that are available, and that there will be fairness and consistency in the manner in which the pupils are treated.
- Parents have the right to communicate with teachers on matters of mutual interest or concern and to expect contact at an early stage to discuss difficulties / problems. Progress reports in accordance with agreed school policy, information on school policies and procedures are legitimate expectations of parents.
- They also have the right to be consulted in relation to the school's code of behaviour and to appeal decisions in accordance with agreed procedures.

4. School Rules:

4.1 Safety

For my own safety and that of others

- I should be careful coming to and going from school
- I should always walk while in the school building
- I should remain seated at all times in class, if/when teacher has to leave classroom for short periods and while eating lunch
- I should always show respect for my fellow pupils
- I should bring a note of explanation following absences
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal / Teacher / SNA on duty.

4.2 Caring for Myself

- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- I should always be in school before the bell rings at 9.30am
- I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day
- I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness
- I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, minerals, sweets or chewing gum are not permitted, except on special occasions
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

4.3 Caring for Others

- I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining silent and orderly in my class line
- I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn
- I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, cartons, wrappers etc home or by disposing of it in appropriate manner. I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds
- I should be truthful and honest at all times.
- I should take responsibility for my actions / behaviour at all times.

5 Strategies for dealing with Behaviour – good / inappropriate:

5.1 Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class or at assembly
- A system of merit marks
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to Parent, written or verbal communication.
- Entry into the Golden Ticket Box

5.2 Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows:

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

- Reasoning with pupils
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Prescribing extra work
- Communication with Parents
- Detention
- Temporary separation from peers and/or loss of privileges
- Referral to Principal/Deputy-Principal
- Take note of incident in Behaviour Record Book
- Complete a Behaviour Awareness sheet
- Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88).

5.3 Procedures:

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours, as follows:

5.4 Examples of minor misdemeanours

- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school
- Running in school building
- Talking in class line
- Littering
- Not wearing correct uniform
- Being discourteous/unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason.
- Playing in an unsafe way in the school yard.

Please note this list is not exhaustive

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours

- Verbal reprimand/reasoning with pupil

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours

Phase 1

- Write story of what happened **or** one copy of school rules **or** relevant rule to upper limit of 20 times
- Note in homework journal to be signed by Parent
- Temporary separation from peers and or loss of privileges
- Sending to another teacher.
- Noting instance of yard misbehaviour in yard book.

- Warning to pupils whose name appear in yard book more than three times
- Note to parents concerning further misbehaviour in yard [Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/other pupil at risk]

Phase 2

- Send to Deputy Principal
- Send to Principal
- Class teacher meets one/both parents
- Principal/D-Principal meets one/both parents concerning behaviour.

5.5 Examples of serious misdemeanours

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Damaging other pupil's property
- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Back answering a teacher
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
- Using unacceptable language
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, religion, physical condition or disability
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil
- Being under the influence of an illegal drug, intoxicant or stimulant.

Please note this list is not exhaustive

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours

- Send to Deputy Principal
- Send to Principal
- Principal sends note, in Journal, or by post, to be returned, signed by parent
- Principal meets with one/both Parents
- Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal.

5.6 Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps /fire hose turned on
- Causing malicious damage to school property
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil
- Bringing weapons or prohibited articles to school
- The sale or passing of any illegal substance as referenced in The Substance Use Policy

Please note this list is not exhaustive

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours

- Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) i.e. ‘No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of Patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality’.

It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only: It is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.

6. Procedures in respect of Suspension. (as per TUSLA (NEWB) Guidelines

6.1 Definition of Suspension: *‘requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’* ...Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

6.2 Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an ‘Immediate Suspension’ to the Principal Teacher. An ‘Immediate Suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

6.3 Immediate Suspension

An ‘Immediate Suspension’ will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An ‘Immediate Suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

6.4 Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- i. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

7. Procedures in respect of Expulsion

7.1 Definition of Expulsion:

‘A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.’ Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

7.2 Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion: Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

(a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour,
- Details of the impending investigation process
- Notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond

(b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management.

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parent(s)/guardians 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
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)

(c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose

(d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted

iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer

v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely 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 pupils or staff

(e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to 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 will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

8. NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence;

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified in writing • Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences cause by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

Ratified & signed at Board of Management meeting on

Signed: _____
Bernard Kearney, Chairperson