

Scoil Mhuire; Knockraha, Co. Cork.

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Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement:

We take great pride in the fact, that we have the highest standards of behaviour evident in our school at all times. The rare incidents of misbehaviour which arise are dealt with promptly, with due consideration for everybody involved. A culture of care, concern, support, interest and friendliness has evolved over many years in Scoil Mhuire and permeates all aspects of the life and work here. We strive in cooperation with the parents to provide a holistic education in a Christian, caring and secure environment where each child is encouraged to achieve to the best of his/her ability.

Rationale:

This policy emerges out of a consideration and review of the present Code of Behaviour, in existence in the school for many years now. The present review is prompted not by any change in the long-standing culture of high-standard behaviour, but by a requirement to update our Code in light of the publication of Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools, published by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) in May 2008. This version of the Code of Behaviour has emerged after consultation in which teachers, parents, ancillary staff, senior pupils and the Board of Management. The conclusions drawn, and recommendations made, were taken into consideration in drafting this updated policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, pupils and other relevant persons on how we ensure an orderly climate for learning in our school. This policy will:

- Identify standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
- Detail measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- Set out procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school and the grounds for removing a suspension imposed;
- Set out the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school;
- Ensure our school is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.

Aims and Objectives:

By implementing this policy and the appended school rules we hope:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others

- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- 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
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Roles and Responsibility

Responsibility

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the partners in education i.e. the Board of Management, Principal and teaching staff, pupils and the parents and guardians of the pupils in Scoil Mhuire.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Ratify the code.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner and arrange for review of the Code, as required.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil and affirm good work.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually.

- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.

Parents'/Guardians' Responsibilities

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- All parents will be made aware of the procedures when enrolling a child. Parents will be required to sign the code to confirm that the code is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by the child.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation.
- Be familiar with the Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Communicate in writing the reason for your child's absence from school on their return.

School Rules

Respect for person and property and the need for order and boundaries are the underlying principles for our school rules. Our Code of Behaviour focuses on promoting good behaviour, which is built on respect - for ourselves, for each other and for our school. There are a number of specific rules regarding punctuality etc. which are included in Appendix A to this policy, but in general our rules can be expressed very simply as:

- ⇒ Have respect for yourself
- ⇒ Have respect for others
- ⇒ Have respect for your school

Behaviour that does not conform to one or more of these rules can be considered unacceptable. Within each rule we have certain expectations (see Appendix B).

The list of rules may vary slightly from time to time, depending on circumstances and as the need arises. These rules are brought to the attention of the children through the class teachers on a regular basis and, in any event, at the start of each term.

Acknowledging good Behaviour

Good behaviour is acknowledged in a variety of ways:

- ⇒ Praise and encouragement are dispensed lavishly when merited
- ⇒ Token rewards are dispensed at the teachers' discretion when merited
- ⇒ Favourable commendation is awarded to pupils in public in classrooms and at school assembly when merited
- ⇒ Smiling to show approval forms a big part of the life of the school

How Pupils, Staff and Parents help each other meet standards expected in our school

Support for one another is demonstrated in a variety of ways:

- ⇒ Excellent, open lines of communication between teachers and pupils, and, between home and school are established and nurtured
- ⇒ The school's Code of Behaviour and the appended school rules are distributed to all parents on the first day of each school year
- ⇒ The school rules are revised with pupils at the start of each school term by the class teachers
- ⇒ The principal revises with pupils the definitions of bullying, what pupils should do if they are bullied, and, the consequences of engaging in bullying behaviour.
- ⇒ Advice and guidance to pupils on how to behave is offered in many situations each day by teachers
- ⇒ Pupils are encouraged to speak with one another about their experiences, highlighting their successes and analysing their disappointments
- ⇒ The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum provides opportunities for developing cooperative and supportive mechanisms for addressing obstacles to achievement
- ⇒ Parents support pupils and teachers when behaviour issues arise by working with them to overcome difficulties
- ⇒ Parents familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour, the Anti Bullying Policy

Dealing with minor issues

Pupils are encouraged from a young age to work towards resolving issues themselves and the skills to do so are both taught and modelled by teachers

The school operates a protocol of resolving issues at the lowest level possible and so the class teacher will always attempt to help when things go wrong. Parents approach the class teacher, therefore, in the first instance to resolve concerns they may have.

Pupils bring behaviour issues to teachers for resolution when they are unable to resolve them and teachers encourage, support and show pupils how they may be able to resolve these issues. In this way, pupils are building up the skills necessary for the resolution of issues in later life.

When the teacher judges it is necessary, she will become involved and help resolve a behaviour issue. The vast majority of issues will be resolved at this point. This may happen with or without consulting the parent or the principal or another designated senior member of staff.

Parents are kept informed, as appropriate, about the resolution of behaviour issues and the teacher makes decisions on when this is appropriate or responds to parents' queries at any time. Teachers act on the principle that it is better for parents to be aware than not aware of behaviour issues which arise.

The principal may intervene informally in the resolution of minor issues, as appropriate.

Dealing with more Serious issues

The school operates a protocol for resolving issues at the lowest level possible. In general, when behaviour issues arise which require a sanction either because of the level of disruption, upset or hurt caused, or, because of the persistence of the disruption, upset or hurt, the teacher, (and sometimes the teacher together with the principal) will investigate matters and the teacher, (and sometimes the teacher together with the principal) will decide on the appropriate sanction.

Strategies to deal with issues – A Graded Response

The following strategies, indicating a ladder of intervention, may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- ⇒ Reasoning with the pupil.
- ⇒ Verbal Reprimand, including advice on how to improve.
- ⇒ Temporary separation from peers, friends or others (in class).
- ⇒ Loss Withdrawal of privileges.
- ⇒ Detention during a break period.
- ⇒ Referral to Principal
- ⇒ Communication with parents.
- ⇒ Formal report to the board of management
- ⇒ Suspension
- ⇒ Expulsion

Suspension

As required under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23 (2), the following procedures will apply in the case of suspension: Only in the most exceptional circumstances will suspension be considered. Having regard to the Christian values of this school, attempts will always be made to bring out the best in pupils and to discriminate between disapproval of wrongful actions and the value of each individual in the school community.

In most cases where suspension is being considered, and before any form of suspension is imposed, parents will be invited to attend at the school to discuss their child's behaviour. If the Principal and the Chairman of the Board of Management are satisfied with any undertaking given by the parents of the child and of the child concerned then any suspension being contemplated may be deferred or dropped. Any suspension to be imposed will be notified to

parents in advance and a return time and date specified. The Principal will reintroduce any suspended pupil to his or her class as specified. At the time of return from suspension, it will be necessary for a child and his or her parents to give a formal undertaking that the behaviour which led to suspension will not be repeated. The Principal and, in his or her absence, the Deputy Principal or the Chairman of the Board of Management have been authorised by the Board of Management to impose suspension, when necessary.

In the most exceptional of circumstances, and only in the case of very serious or gross misbehaviour, the Board of Management has authorised the Chairman of the Board of Management and the Principal, acting together, to sanction an immediate suspension, pending discussion of the matter with parents. Additionally, the Principal and Chairman acting together may, at their joint discretion, remove a suspension already imposed in light of changed circumstances or representations which, in the opinion of the Principal and Chairman, warrant such removal. Procedures to be followed in relation to Suspension are outlined in Appendix C.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is a reserved function of the Board of Management and is not delegated to the Principal. Before expelling a pupil, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil. Procedures relating to Expulsion are set out in Appendix D.

When the code of behaviour applies

The school's Code of Behaviour applies during school hours, and at all school organised events. For example: Sciath na Scol, Cór fhéile, City sports, swimming etc.

Bullying

In dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour, teachers have regard to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, which is available to parents on request.

Absences / Communication

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 18, now Túsla, requires parents to notify the Principal of a school of the reasons for a child's absence. Section 23 of the same Act requires the Code of Behaviour of a school to outline the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school. In compliance with these sections, the following procedures apply. For absences of pupils from school days, parents will send a letter upon the return of the child to school outlining the reason(s) for absence.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21(4) requires a School Principal to inform an Educational Welfare Officer in writing if the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is 20 days or more. Additionally, Section 21(4) authorises the School Principal to notify an Educational Welfare Officer if, in the opinion of the Principal, a child "is not attending school regularly".

It is necessary on occasions, for a variety of reasons, for pupils to leave school early. Written notification of this, outlining the reason(s), must be given to the teacher in advance. Parents or others acting on behalf of parents, who call to collect children early, will call to reception and sign their child out.

Good Example

It is difficult to underestimate the powerful impact of good example on children. Parents and teachers are, to a lesser or greater extent, dominant influences in children's lives and, for this reason, the school holds as an ideal that parents and teachers model good example at all times. The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

Review

Our Code of Behaviour will be reviewed annually.


Signed:


Mr Martin Bowen
Chairperson Board of Management

Date:

14/09/2023

Signed:


Ms Niamh O'Sullivan
Principal

Date:

14/09/2023

Appendix A

RULES OF THE SCHOOL

Show respect. Expect respect.
Include everyone.
Be kind.
Be prepared. Be clean. Be on time.

Obey promptly.

We will show respect to all staff by obeying them promptly when asked to do so.

Be prepared, be clean, be on time:

Full school uniform is worn except on P.E. Days.
We will have our homework done.
We will have the correct books and equipment.
We will be on time.
We will eat a healthy lunch.

We will keep our classrooms, corridors, playgrounds and environments clean, tidy and litter-free at all times:

We will care for the school, school furniture and property.
We will use litter bins.
We will be careful with library books, our own books, pencils, markers, crayons.

We will answer the bell promptly:

We will line up quietly.
We will move in single file.
We will always walk in school except when allowed to do otherwise with the class teacher.

We will respect everyone and their property: (Show respect. Expect respect)

We will keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects and comments to ourselves.
We will call others by their proper names.
Bad language, biting, bullying, kicking, punching, spitting is unacceptable behaviour.

APPENDIX B

School Rules

- **Have respect for yourself**
 - Have confidence in your own abilities
 - Take pride in your appearance
 - Value your own safety
 - Work cheerfully and willingly
 - Take pride in your work

- **Have respect for others**
 - Care for all members of our community
 - Value and respect our differences
 - Value and respect the right of all children to an education
 - Value the staff who teach you, who look after you, who clean your school, who maintain the school environment, who take care of the office work etc.
 - Share with others
 - Listen to others without interrupting
 - Be polite and pleasant to everyone
 - Accept decisions
 - Work and move around the school mindful of others
 - Value the work and opinions of others
 - Take care that you do not harm one another -either accidentally or intentionally

- **Have respect for Our School**
 - Put all litter in a bin
 - Always return property
 - Look after displays
 - Use equipment properly
 - Help tidy up
 - Walk quietly around the school
 - Take pride in our school by being polite and pleasant to each other and to visitors
 - Take pride in our school by remembering that people judge our school by our behaviour outside school

APPENDIX C

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil and may do so for up to 10 consecutive school days at one time or for 20 days in a school year. A single incident of misbehaviour may be grounds for automatic suspension.

PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION OTHER THAN FOR AN AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the principal will:

- Inform the student and his/her parents about the complaint either by phone or in writing
- Give the pupil and the parents an opportunity to respond
- Place the pupil in detention until a determination is made about suspension

Parents will be given an opportunity to respond, to make their case for lessening the sanction and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

A pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal recommends to the board of management that a period of suspension longer than 3 days is needed to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management considers the following circumstances are ones where the principal would consider recommending 5 days rather than 3 days as an appropriate suspension. Any one of the following on its own may be considered appropriate to warrant a recommendation of 5 days suspension:

1. when the pupil fails to recognise or acknowledge the seriousness of the events leading to a proposed suspension
2. where injury has been inflicted on another person to such a degree of severity as to warrant medical attention and/or a visit to a doctor
3. where the pupil continues to display belligerence, hostility or aggression

If a suspension longer than 3 days is being recommended by the principal the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. The Board of Management has authorised the principal in writing, with the approval of the Chairman of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the board of management cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance already provided to the principal concerning such suspensions.

The board of management will not impose a suspension of more than 10 consecutive school days on a pupil at any one time.

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a principal's decision to suspend a pupil for 3 days. If an appeal is to be entertained before a suspension is to take place, then the pupil will automatically be placed in detention until the appeal is complete and the appeal decision is relayed to parents. If the appeal against the decision to suspend is not upheld or if the period of suspension is altered but not set aside, then the suspension will begin as soon as practicable after the decision on the appeal is relayed to parents, normally starting the next school day. This applies to suspensions up to 20 days in total for one or more separate periods of suspension in any given school year. The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more.

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

The principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend their child and the letter will confirm:

- the period of 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 commitment to be entered into by the pupil and the parents,
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management, and,
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

A suspension may be removed or altered either immediately or retrospectively if the Board of Management decides, or, if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs it to be removed under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007

PROCEDURES FOR AUTOMATIC SUSPENSIONS

The principal has been authorised to impose an automatic suspension where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person or for any one of the named behaviours listed below:

- The use of an offensive weapon or material to inflict injury or harm on another person or to threaten to inflict injury or harm on another person
- The defiant refusal to carry out the instruction of a teacher

- To protect the safety of the pupil or other pupils or staff
- The deliberate destruction of school property

In the circumstances of an automatic suspension, the parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. No pupil will be sent home alone ever.

In the circumstances where an automatic suspension is considered by the principal to be warranted for one or more of the named behaviours, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of an automatic suspension during which the suspended pupil will be invited to the school to be interviewed by arrangement in the school either in the presence of his/her parents or not.

REINTEGRATING THE PUPIL AND STARTING WITH A CLEAN SLATE

The principal will arrange for a member of staff to provide support for the pupil during the reintegration process. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

RECORDING AND REPORTING

A record of the behaviour and sanction imposed will be kept which will include:

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

The school will then expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

The principal, if acting on the written delegated authority to suspend, will report all suspensions to the Board of Management with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The principal will report all suspensions to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 21(4)(a))

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension 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 use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

APPENDIX D

EXPULSION PROCEDURES

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is a reserved function of the Board of Management and is not delegated to the Principal.

Before expelling a pupil, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:

1. Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
2. Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of the behaviour, if it should persist.
3. Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
4. Seeking the assistance of support agencies, if appropriate

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a student requires serious grounds, such that:

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

PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION OTHER THAN FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps will apply:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by an Education Welfare Officer of the National Educational Welfare Board
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

EXPULSION FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

The Board of Management reserves the right to expel pupils for a first offence for the following behaviours:

1. A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
2. Actual violence or physical assault.
3. The supply of illegal drugs to other students in the school.
4. Sexual assault.