



Code of Behaviour

This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community (students, staff and parents) will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. It should be read in conjunction with our Policy on Supporting Children's Behaviour of Concern, our Anti-Bullying Policy and our Dignity at Work Policy.

This policy is a collaboration between Principal, teachers, parents, students and Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Girls National School. It was formulated in the light of "Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools" (NEWB, 2008)

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school.

In Scoil Mhuire we hope to foster this ideal in cooperation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school. It is a direct development of the Vision Statement of the school where we stress the importance of our Catholic ethos and our aim to place the child at the centre of all our endeavours, so that she can reach her full potential in a caring Christian atmosphere.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal and issues of concern should be reported to the Principal as they arise. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Any rules will be conveyed to children in an age and developmentally appropriate manner, in clear and accessible language, with clear agreed consequences. The individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour and mutual respect
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self management in pupils and to support good behaviour

patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others

- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster a caring and respectful attitude to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of, and adherence to, this policy

Responsibility of Adults in the School

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children. We subscribe to the Code of Conduct for teachers as laid down by the Teaching Council. See appendix

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive learning environment with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy and an awareness of others.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, religious ethos, ability or disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- Discourage physical aggression and encourage *'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'*.

School Rules

1. We show respect for ourselves and others
2. We show respect to other students and their learning by ensuring our behaviour does not impact negatively on others
3. We are kind and willing to help others
4. We follow instructions from staff immediately
5. We walk quietly in the school building
6. We show courtesy and good manners
7. We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
8. We ask permission to leave the classroom/school.
9. We do our best in class
10. We take responsibility for our own work
11. We show respect for our own property and the property of others
12. We wear the appropriate uniform.
13. We follow our Healthy Eating Policy.

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules in consultation with the children. These will reflect and support the school rules but will be presented in a way that

is accessible to the children at a developmentally appropriate level. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual differences. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage with a view to working together to achieve a positive outcome.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special educational needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Our Policy on Supporting Children's Behaviour of Concern should be read in conjunction with this Code. Specialised behavioural plans will be put in place in consultation with parents, the class teacher, special education teacher, and the Principal. Cognitive and emotional development will be taken into account at all times. Information provided by psychological and other professional assessments will be included, as appropriate.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Incentives to encourage positive behaviour

Part of the vision of Scoil Mhuire is to help children achieve their full potential - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that children use a variety of approaches to learn well. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for academic achievement.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A system of merit marks, treats or stickers
- Extra play time or "Golden Time"
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly.

Inappropriate Behaviour

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's

behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Using electronic equipment or mobile-phones during school
- Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum
- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation and the use of inappropriate language in person or through social media)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical harm to another person
- Damage to personal or school property
- Theft
- Bringing dangerous or potentially harmful equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities (including extracurricular) without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to personal or school property
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes
- Serious bullying - Continuous repeated aggression: physical, verbal or emotional conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

• PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.

• VERBAL: name calling or comments that hurt, insult or humiliate.

• EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding physical appearance, dress, progress, race, culture and ability or disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. "Cyber/text" bullying.

Bullying is prohibited in Scoil Mhuire. Alleged incidents of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the schools Anti-Bullying Policy.

Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development)

- to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour

- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed

to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features:

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to prevent future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided if possible to avoid creating resentment within the class
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- **The focus should be on the behaviour rather than the person.**

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies supporting good behaviour. Sanctions will be handed out in a timely manner and relate to the nature of the behaviour. These sanctions are not in a hierarchy and will be used according to the behaviour in question at the time.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Misbehaviour may be recorded by the teacher
5. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
6. Loss of privileges
7. Temporary separation from peers during break times
8. Teacher communication with parents
9. Referral to Principal
10. Principal communication with parents
11. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal, by email or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved. Records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions, other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information will be considered. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they will be told about their right to appeal to the Board of Management and to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s) may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent(s) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code 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 if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

At the time when parents are being notified of a decision to expel a pupil, they will be notified that they may appeal such a decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents are encouraged to talk to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (Infants homework folder)
- Letters/notes/phonecall from school to home and from home to school
- Email
- Aladdin Schools
- Twitter
- Newsletters/school website
- TextaParent service
- Principal/Parents' Association communication

Attendance

Each child is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual. When a child is absent, parents must record on Aladdin Schools, phone, email or record a note in the school journal giving reasons for the child's absence. If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. Parents are reminded at the start of each year that should their child miss in excess of 20 days, a letter is sent to the NEWB.

Review

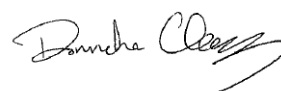
This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in consultation with school staff, parents and pupils. It was ratified by the Board of Management on 23rd January 2024 and will be subject to periodic review.

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management
Date: 23rd January 2024

Signed:



Principal
Date: 23rd January 2024

Date of next review: January 2025