

Scoil Mhuire B&C Stranorlar

Code of Behaviour



1. Introduction

The Code of Behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures based on the Ethos of the school that together form the school's plan for helping pupils in the school to behave well and to learn well.

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among Staff, Pupils and Parents. (The term parents refers both to parents and guardians throughout this document). We expect parents to educate children to show respect for fellow pupils, and in particular respect for teachers. We strongly advise that all parents show full and positive support of the teachers' decisions which are taken in the best interests of the children concerned. We consider it the duty of parents to support teachers' decisions openly to their children. Should they have reservations on a particular matter an appointment should be made to discuss it with the teacher concerned. A copy of this Code of Behaviour shall be provided on registration.

2. Rationale

All policies need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they meet the current needs of the school. The Code of Behaviour Policy was reviewed because:

- it is a requirement under Department of Education and Science Circular 20/90 on school discipline
- the existing policy is due for review and amendment
- it is a priority area identified by staff and Board of Management
- it is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on school to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the pupils registered at the school
- to ensure policy is in compliance with legal requirement and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

3. Aims

The overall aim of the Code of Behaviour is to encourage, reinforce and promote positive behaviour among the pupils and to reward good behaviour, good attitude and courtesy. The aim of this document is to raise awareness among Parents and Staff of the importance of maintaining positive / appropriate behaviour. Prevention rather than cure is our aim.

The Code of Behaviour aims to :

- allow the school to function in a harmonious and orderly way.

- create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- ensure the safety and well-being of all the members of the school community.
- seek the co-operation of parents and pupils in its application.
- allow each child reach their educational potential without behavioural disruptions from other children in class.
- ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- promote a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.
- prevent, identify and deal effectively with bullying. (see separate Anti-Bullying Policy)
- promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognizing the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

All children are involved in the drawing up of classroom rules with their class teacher at the beginning of each academic year. Pupils are regularly made aware of the Code of Behaviour e.g. at the beginning of each school term/prior to school outings etc. and at different times through various subject areas, discussions and assemblies.

Standards of behaviour expected from pupils:

- each child is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration and respect to other children and adults in school and in all school related activities e.g. school tours, sports outings, theatre/cinema trips, swimming, Church outings and any other out of school activities etc.
- each child is expected to show respect for the property of other children, the staff, the school, and their own belongings
- each child is expected to comply with Homework policy, school and classroom rules
- each child is expected to wear the correct school uniform and adhere to requirements regarding jewelry. See Appendix B
- each child is expected to attend school regularly and to be punctual

It is recognised that certain factors may influence a child's behaviour e.g. bereavement, trauma, educational needs, emotional need, behavioural needs, medical condition, etc. and may be taken into consideration.

Parents

Parents were involved in the original drawing up of the Code of Behaviour, and have been given an opportunity to contribute to this review. When making application for enrolment parents will be given copies of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. On receiving an offer of a place for their child, parents will be required to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy and any subsequent changes is acceptable to them and that they will make every effort to ensure compliance by their child.

Parents will support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour by:

- ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually
- encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- co-operating with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- attending meetings at the school if requested
- helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed and signed
- ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school
- ensuring their children always wear the correct school uniform
- sharing any relevant information with the school which may affect a pupil's behaviour.

A note or message on Aladdin is required from parents in relation to :

(1) Any failure to wear the school uniform on a given day.

(2) Homework that is undone.

(3) Any change in school routine / collection hours etc.

Staff

In accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council 2012), the staff are expected to treat all children with respect and dignity and to implement the Code of Behaviour in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner. The school's Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help the 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.

New staff and substitutes are briefed on all policies and practices within the school.

Staff will regularly make the children aware of the Code of Behaviour and will remind them of the expectations throughout the school year.

BOM

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board of Management will ratify the Code of Behaviour and will continually monitor its implementation making adjustments as necessary.

5. Whole School Approach

The Code of Behaviour policy requires the co-operation of staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management. It is important that everyone knows what is expected, what procedures are in place to support and promote the policy and to deal with problems that may arise. In promoting positive behaviour the school has in place policies and procedures which cover all aspects of the school day e.g. arrival, dismissal, in-class management, school yard, wet days, movement through the school, etc. In developing this Code of Behaviour all school policies and practices, curriculum and classroom management practices have been considered with regard to promoting positive behaviour.

In our school we strive to:

- Create a happy, friendly caring and welcoming school that will provide for pupils' needs in a sensitive way
- Foster a positive self-image in pupils, building self-confidence through praise, reward and encouragement
- Encourage a positive attitude to life and learning enabling each child to reach his/her full potential
- Prepare pupils for life by teaching social independence and academic skills
- Ensure that all pupils and staff are valued
- Promote an atmosphere of co-operation, with management, staff, parents and pupils
- Develop links with the wider community
- Develop a positive awareness of self, sensitivity towards other people and a respect for the rights, views and feelings of others
- Develop a faith community through the teaching of Catholic beliefs

This will be achieved through :

- (a) regular discussion about disciplinary issues at Staff Meetings.
- (b) briefing of Parents at the General Meeting of Parents in September.
- (c) briefing of all new and temporary Staff on appointment (all to be issued with copy of code)
- (d) consultation with the Board on matters pertaining to Discipline.

- (e) providing children with an opportunity to have input into the implementation of the Code of Behaviour e.g. Drafting Classroom Rules, Buddy Systems, Circle Time.
- (f) Ongoing Professional Development and / or support for Staff
- (g) Units of the SPHE Programme are specifically tailored towards the promotion of good behaviour.
- (h) Assembly.
- (i) School and Class Awards and announcements.
- (j) Playground Routines.
- (k) Input to Parents / Home School Liaison.

Positive Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour:

The following strategies are used to promote positive behaviour in the classroom and the school yard and other areas of the school:

- ground rules/behavioural expectations are consistent with the ethos of the school
- pupils are involved in devising classroom rules
- clear systems of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour include praise, Golden Time, Reward Charts, Homework Passes, notes home, pupils of the week, acknowledgement by the Principal etc. NB Teachers usually have their own in class reward system.
- classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- zoned areas within the playground for the different age groups
- clear arrangements and expectations for wet days NB pupils are supervised in the classrooms on wet days
- clear arrangements and expectations in the corridors and halls
- Circle-time, SPHE, Drama, the Arts Curriculum, Religious Education, Friends for Life, Circle of Friends etc.
- Giving children responsibility for particular tasks in the school

6. Rules

Parents will appreciate that it is not possible to have an exhaustive list of rules regarding unacceptable behaviour. The following are merely examples for the classroom, the playground and around the school in general.

Classroom Rules

1. Children have input in devising class rules.
2. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

3. Each teacher to have a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour, and sanctions for misbehaviour.
4. Each teacher to employ classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.

The following behaviour is to be encouraged :

- **Completing work in Class**
- **Completing homework.**
- **Working quietly when requested.**
- **Putting hands up to speak / taking turns to speak.**
- **Remaining in the seat.**
- **Respecting the property of all others.**
- **Eating in class only at the designated times. (Exceptions will be made for children with medical conditions which require regular intake of food).**
- **Respecting classmates both inside and outside the classroom.**
- **Wearing the specified school uniform.**
- **Refraining from using inappropriate or vulgar language.**

Playground Rules

Our Playground Rules are as follows :

- **We play safely and stay in our own designated area**
- **We stop when the bell rings**
- **We line up quietly**
- **We talk to the adults on duty if we need to**
- **We ask for permission to leave the playground to use the toilet facilities, and we inform an adult when we return.**
- **We use appropriate language at all times**
- **We do not annoy or interfere with other children in any way.**

A detailed schedule for yard duty is drawn up for each day of the school year. Teachers are assisted by the Special Needs Assistants. Zones have been created within the playground for the various class groupings. Footballs have been provided as well as marked playground games. Board games and other comparable activities have been provided for in class activities during breaks on wet days. Incidents of misbehaviour are reported to the class teacher.

General Rules

Children will also be reminded of the following rules :

- All potentially harmful items (e.g. blades and knives etc.) are not allowed in school.
- No loitering in the toilets.
- No running in the hallways or on the stairs.
- No Chewing Gum.
- Hooped / Drop Earrings, Nose Studs or any piece of jewellery that may be deemed a risk to the Health and Safety of pupils are not to be worn in school.
- Pens / Pencils / Crayons / Food not to be taken into toilet areas or outside.
- Money should not be left in pockets in the cloaks areas. Coats should be clearly marked.
- Classroom areas / toilets / corridors and outdoor areas to be kept neat and tidy. Bins are provided in all areas.
- The wearing of hair dye, make-up or accessories that may cause distraction is not permitted.
- Children are not allowed to play outside of the designated playground areas, or climb on walls or on fencing.
- The use of electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, smart watches is not permitted. These will be confiscated and parents can collect them from the Principal's Office.
- Smoking, drinking alcohol and the use of illegal substances is prohibited and parents will be contacted immediately.
- Each child is expected to enter and leave the school in an orderly manner. Good behaviour is necessary to avoid accidents. Avoid rushing or pushing towards buses.
- Bullying, including cyber bullying, is a matter which the school takes extremely seriously and will not be permitted.

Parents will be informed of serious or persistent misbehaviour in class or in the school playground.

7. Disciplinary Procedures

No two disciplinary situations are ever precisely the same. The circumstances and particular needs of pupils, teachers and others will vary together with the particular conditions in which breaches of discipline may occur. Therefore, each case will be judged on its merits.

The following are strategies which may be used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour :

- Reasoning with pupil

- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Loss of privileges
- Detention during a break
- Prescribing additional work
- Suspension from school representation e.g. sports teams /quiz teams
- Referral to Principal Teacher
- Communication with Parents
- Individual Behaviour Programmes

Although the overall focus is on reinforcing positive behaviour it is important that sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are also in place, to include the classroom, playground and general school area.

See Appendix A for a non exhaustive list of examples of misdemeanours and sanctions.

Involving Parents in Management of Behaviour:

Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help they may be at risk of failing behaviorally, socially and educationally.

In consultation with parents additional inputs or interventions might include:

- involving the Learning Support/Resource team
- setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way
- behaviour contracts/plans with individualized strategies.

A small minority of pupils may have great difficulty in learning new behaviour and may not respond to low-level interventions. These pupils will need a sustained and systematic response involving school and home. The Principal and staff have good links with local support services that may be able to assist in responding to the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties. These services include the National Educational Psychology Services (NEPS), HSE Community Psychology Services, the National Council for Special Education and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

8. SUSPENSION

Suspension is the withdrawal of permission from a pupil to attend school (and all school related activity) for a specified period of time or pending the completion of a particular event or instruction. Suspension of a pupil will take place following a serious breach of school rules.

Circumstances in which suspension might be considered may include the following which is by no means an exhaustive list :

- (1) Repeated incidents of indiscipline in spite of warnings and counselling by Staff.**

- (2) Failure to recognise and submit to legitimate authority.
- (3) Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right to learn of other pupils.
- (4) Serious incidents which endanger the welfare of others.
- (5) Deliberate destruction or damaging of property, either belonging to the school, other students, members of staff or visitors..
- (6) Stealing.
- (7) Smoking.
- (8) Total Refusal to work.

Suspension may last for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the offence. The Principal in conjunction with the Board of Management will determine the length of time of the suspension. In exceptional circumstances the Principal and the Board of Management may agree that a suspension of longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. Parents will be informed by telephone of the complaint and that it may result in suspension depending on the seriousness of the matter. They will also be informed in writing of the reasons for the suspension. This ensures that there is a formal and permanent record of letting the parents know what their child is alleged to have done.

This letter will confirm –

- the duration of the suspension
- reasons for the suspension
- arrangements for returning to school including a commitment to be entered into by the parents and pupil re-affirming their acceptance of the Code of Behaviour
- the right to appeal to the Board of Management
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science if the suspension period bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in the school year (Section 29 Education act 1998, amended 2007).

A program of study will be sent out via Aladdin by the child's teacher.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Normal practice is that parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and any sanction imposed. This will preferably be done in the form of a meeting at which it is very important parents and pupil attend so that they can present their side of the situation.

The Board of Management authorises the Principal to impose a suspension of up to three days in circumstances where a Board meeting cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for the safety of the pupil, other pupils, Staff and/or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for an immediate suspension. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of such a suspension. In this case parents / guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

Reintegrating the pupil

On returning to school following the suspension, the parents/ guardians of the said pupil should accompany the child and a commitment must be given, in writing, in relation to good behaviour. The pupil must agree to adhere to all school policies and rules governing them i.e commitment to the Code of Behaviour.

The school will help the pupil to take responsibility to catch up on work missed. The class teacher will provide support to the pupil during the reintegration process. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

APPEALS

Where the Principal makes a decision to suspend a pupil an appeal may be made in writing within 5 days to the Board of Management.

In the case of a decision to suspend by the Principal, in conjunction with the Board of Management, an appeal may be provided to an appeals committee of the Board of Management. This committee will be constituted of a minimum of three, at least two of which will be members of the Board of Management.

A guardian / parent has a right to appeal any suspension in excess of twenty days to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. **The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the Board's Guidelines when a suspension is in excess of twenty days or more.**

9. EXPULSION

A pupil is expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him / her from school. If, in the judgement of the Principal a pupil should be expelled, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management for decision.

It is not possible to be exhaustive when listing the circumstances that would justify the expulsion of a pupil. The following are some examples :

- (a) The pupil is so disruptive that he is seriously preventing other pupils from learning and /or the teacher from teaching.
- (b) The pupil is uncontrollable and is not amenable to any form of school authority.
- (c) The parent / guardian refuses to exercise their responsibility for the pupil.

- (d) The pupil's conduct is a source of serious bad example and is having an adverse influence on the other pupils in the school.
- (e) The pupil's misbehaviour towards a Staff member or management is of a serious nature.
- (f) If the pupil's behaviour is in contravention of the Health & Safety Act.
- (g) The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to a pupil's behaviour. Expulsion is a very serious step that that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will take significant steps to address misbehaviour and to avoid the expulsion of the pupil including, as appropriate :

- Meeting with Parents and the pupil to try and find ways to help the pupil to change his / her behaviour.
- Attempting to ensure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of his / her behaviour , if it should persist.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, HSE Primary and Continuing Community Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, the National Council for Special Education.

It is the right of the Board of Management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in Scoil Mhuire to ensure the safety of the pupils.

Expulsion for a first offence

The Board of Management may form the opinion that a pupil 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 could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of Staff.
- Actual Physical violence or assault.
- Supplying illegal substances to other pupils in the school.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirm serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

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. In accordance with the principles of natural justice, the parents / guardians of the pupil whose expulsion is being considered will be

- given the opportunity of attending the Board meeting and presenting their case. They can also present their case in writing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
 5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29) within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or pupil. The National Education Welfare Board may also bring an appeal on behalf of a pupil.

Absences

The Education Welfare Act 2000 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a pupil's absence and the reason for this absence. The Education Welfare Board will be notified when the cumulative number of days in which any child has been absent exceeds twenty days. This matter will then be dealt with by the School Attendance Officer. Parents are asked to give a reason for each absence via Aladdin.

Reviewing the Code

The process of reviewing the Code of Behaviour is part of a continuous cycle arising from the use of the Code in the school. Our Code will be reviewed every two years. The review will look at how the Code of Behaviour is working. It will draw on a range of sources of information and evidence, including the experience and views of teachers, other staff, pupils and parents. Any information will be used to strengthen the Code. A review of a specific area of the Code will :

- Look at what is happening in that area
- Evaluate how well this is working
- Explore and generate options for improvement or development.
- Make a Plan for implementing agreed proposals.

This Code of Behaviour was adopted by the Board of Management on 7th November 2023. This Code of Behaviour was reviewed by the Board of Management on __[most recent review date].

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A

Minor Misbehaviours

- Running in the school building
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Disrupting the teacher or other pupils in class
- Not doing homework
- Minor breaches of general, class and playground rules
- Minor breaches of the acceptable use policy regarding the misuse of technology and internet
- Minor damage to property (drawing on furniture, drawing on other pupils belongings)
- Littering around the school
- Not lining up on stairs
- Incomplete uniform

Serious Misbehaviours

- Calling names, discrimination, bullying, racism victimisation
- Telling lies
- Rudeness or disrespect in addressing a staff member or adult
- Deliberate, continual disobedience
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Breaking/seriously damaging school property
- Forging a parent's signature
- Minor theft
- Use of unacceptable language
- Inappropriate gestures
- Serious breaches of general, class and yard rules
- Serious breaches of the acceptable use policy regarding the misuse of technology and internet
- Use of mobile phones or electronic equipment
- Pushing or messing on stairs

Gross Misbehaviours

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour including physical assault or verbal

abuse

- Leaving school premises without permission
- Physical or verbal aggression/physically harming another child or staff member
- Endangering self or fellow pupils
- Bringing dangerous substances to school
- Gross breaches of the acceptable use policy regarding the misuse of technology and internet

Responses to minor misbehaviours:

- Verbal reprimand/reasoning with the pupil
- Withdrawal of privilege
- Note home to be signed by parent
- Time out/cooling off period
- Noting instance of misbehaviour in yard book (misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts self/other pupil at risk)
- Red mark
- Sending to another teacher
- Class teacher to meet one/both parents/guardian for regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours

Responses to serious misbehaviours:

- Warning
- In class sanctions
- Parents contacted via phone
- Detention
- Behaviour plan set up
- Meeting with teacher, parents and principal if no improvement shown

Responses to gross misbehaviours:

- Management and principal involved
- Chairperson/principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
- Suspension of up to three day period to follow
- Repeated suspension will occur in certain circumstances to a maximum of 20 days. The National Education Welfare Board will then become involved.
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case.
- In exceptional cases, where there are a lot of behavioural issues in a class, classes may be reconfigured.

Appendix B

Scoil Mhuire, Stranorlar

School Uniform

The uniform is very important for the image of the school and it enforces your child's association with the school. We ask you to adhere strictly to the colour scheme of the uniform. Parents have chosen this uniform, it is neat and tidy

School uniform for Boys and Girls:

Jumpers: Crested sweatshirt available in McElhinneys

Shirt: Pale blue polo shirt

Tracksuit bottoms: Plain Navy tracksuit bottoms.

NB Leggings, tracksuits with stripes and/or logos are not permitted.

Flat sensible shoes/boots/runners in must be worn.

Stud earrings are the only types of earrings allowed, for safety reasons.

Property marking:

All personal belonging should be marked clearly. This avoids confusion and loss of property. The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for children's property.

A note/ message on Aladdin is required if for some reason a child is not wearing the full uniform on a particular day