

SCOIL MUIRE NA TRÓCAIRE



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Introductory Statement:

This Code of Behaviour was initially formulated by the Staff of Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire in consultation with pupils, parent's reps and members of the Board of Management during the school year 2016-2017. It was reviewed on 10th September 2020, to include Appendix 1 – Covid 19 Restrictions.

Rationale:

This Code of Behaviour was reviewed

- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- To ensure our current code is in line with the Department guidelines regarding Covid 19

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:

Our Code of Behaviour supports our ethos which is that Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire seeks to help all children attending our school, to grow and develop into healthy, confident adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. We strive to create a happy, safe environment for the school body as a whole, where everyone can feel secure, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with both understanding and respect and that their concerns will be addressed fairly.

Aims:

- 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 child 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

Content:

- Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire seeks to promote positive and appropriate behaviour at all times. The following measures are in place in our school to ensure that such an approach is taken

Standards/Guidelines of Behaviour:

The following standards of behaviour shall be observed by each student attending the school:

Respect for Self

- Each student is responsible for observing the school and classroom rules under the guidance of their teacher
- Proper school uniform must be worn daily
- In accordance with the school policy on healthy eating, students are advised to bring healthy lunches and abide by the lunch rules
- All homework given should be attempted and completed where possible. It is the responsibility of parents to sign the Homework Journal following completion of homework noting any difficulties experienced by the child
- Children are encouraged to show respect for themselves and others by being courteous and well mannered at all times in school or when representing the school
- Children are expected to be honest and truthful at all times
- Children are expected to attend school daily and punctually. A written explanatory note must be provided for all absences
- Children are encouraged to participate in school activities, which will aid personal and social development
- If child would like to wear earrings, stud earrings and very small hoop earring (The space between the earring and ear can not fit a small finger) only are allowed.
- Pupils in the senior classes may use tip-ex tape roller, however tip-ex pens and bottles are not allowed.
- No false nails or eye lashes

Respect For Other Pupils

Children are encouraged to:

- Play fairly – take turns, include everyone, avoid play fighting, stay calm – control temper, accept blame and consequences, apologise and say sorry, forgive and forget
- When the bell rings freeze and walk to the class line when it ceases
- Respect everyone, speak politely, and listen without interrupting and use your “indoor voice” at all times when speaking
- All children are encouraged to remember that insulting or belittling others is unacceptable

Respect For Adults

Staff, Parents, Children are encouraged to:

- Show all adults working in the school environment (inside and outside of school) courtesy and respect, e.g. speak politely, display good manners, and be helpful and pleasant
- Accept the authority of the adults in school and their right to teach and impose sanctions on those who behave inappropriately
- Remember that your teacher has a job to do, help him/her by behaving appropriately in class and in the school environment

Respect For Property

Children are expected to:

- Respect all school property and the property of others including, desks, classroom equipment, toilets etc.
- Respect all schoolbooks, library books and books belonging to the book – lending scheme as books are a very valuable resource for learning
- Remember that our school is a litter free environment and all children from a young age are encouraged to recycle, therefore children are expected to use recyclable containers when bringing lunches to school and anything which is not recyclable at the school must be returned home. Chewing gum is prohibited in school.
- Eat lunch inside the classroom. Food is not allowed in the schoolyard

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- Be proud of their classroom, and treat it with respect, keep it tidy and help the teacher to keep it in order
- Respect school property loaned to them i.e. jerseys, set dancing shoes etc and return them in perfect condition

Guidelines For Parents:

Parents are asked to:

- Arrange an appointment outside of school/class hours if they need to discuss a child's progress or a problem. Parents are asked not to disrupt class work without a very good reason for doing so
- Show support for school staff in their implementation of the schools behaviour policy
- Support their children in their schoolwork and encourage them to have the necessary materials
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of their child and always sign in and sign out in the School Record Book
- Ensure your child has a positive attitude to, and abides by the school and class rules
- Never undermine the authority of the school or school staff and to promote respect for teachers and other school personnel
- Mutuality of respect between teachers and parents at meetings is encouraged
- Ensure that a guardian is available at all times to be reached in case of an emergency in school
- Follow the complaints procedure
- Help children with homework and ensure it is completed to the best of their child's ability
- To attend Parent-Teacher meetings

Staff:

At staff meetings discussions take place regarding behaviour issues and feedback is given from staff members who have attended courses on behaviour management

The following are a list of strategies adopted by our staff to promote positive behaviour

- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff or the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class – (not always suitable for Senior Classes)
- A mention to a parent – written or verbal
- Implementation of Programmes such as Circle Time, Social Skills groups and Walk Tall to promote positive behaviour
- Celebrating of achievement during Assembly Time
- Commendation for children who show kindness to others especially in the yard

We show the children that we care by:

- Greeting them when they come to school
- Asking them how they feel
- Empathising with their feelings
- Finding out as much about them as we can and showing an interest in their lives
- Sending positive messages home
- Spending time playing with them

We show the children we believe in them when we:

- ❖ Celebrate children's abilities, talents and achievements
- ❖ Encourage children to speak positively about themselves – start at infant level, encourage parents to encourage this in their children
- ❖ Encourage the class to recognise each other's strengths and to speak well of each other

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- ❖ Communicate your belief in them

We show the children we trust them by:

- ❖ Giving children choices
- ❖ Giving them responsibilities – Buddy System, Library time, Litter picking, Green School Committee
- ❖ Sharing our thoughts and feelings with them
- ❖ Encouraging them to help one another

We always separate the behaviour from the child and make every effort to send the children home happy

The Code of Behaviour will be communicated to new and temporary Staff/SNAs by the Principal

- ❖ The school SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour
- ❖ Each September each class will devise their own set of classroom rules

Roles & Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The Board of Management review and examine the Code of Behaviour – for amendments and approval. At a later stage the B.O.M. will ratify the Code. The B.O.M. has responsibility to ensure that the Code is implemented and reviewed regularly. The B.O.M. supports and promotes continuous professional development of all staff members. The Chairperson regularly commends work of students and staff. The B.O.M. will support the Code of Behaviour through the Fun Day at the end of school year.

The Chairperson of the B.O.M. is kept informed on a regular basis of issues regarding serious or continuous breaches of the code of behaviour. Continuous breaches of the Code of Behaviour will be brought to the attention of the B.O.M. The following procedure will be set in motion – a meeting organised between the Chairperson, Principal, and the parents to discuss how the situation can be resolved. The B.O.M. will follow the procedures for Suspension/Expulsion as outlined in the NEWB guidelines.

Parents:

The Code of Behaviour is available to view on the school website The school welcomes parents to make an appointment to meet with teachers. Homework Journal is used as a method to communicate between parents and teachers e.g. positive rewards and stickers in same.

Issues of behaviour will be discussed at Parent – Teacher meetings:

Parents are responsible for:

- ❖ Ensure their children attend school 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
- ❖ Helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed within a reasonable time frame

The School is responsible for:

- Newsletter each term may be used to highlight the occasions when children display positive behaviour "Well done to everybody".
- At meetings/Communion and Confirmation the school acknowledges Parental support and praises the good behaviour of their children.

Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- ❖ Participating in S.P.H.E. class to discuss and formulate class rules. Pupils are given an opportunity to review and modify accordingly the class rules, rewards and sanctions.
- ❖ Adjusting their behaviour to comply with agreed rules

Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

The school places bigger emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will in the long run give the best results. All adults within the school should model the behaviour that is expected from students within the school.

Classroom:

Within each classroom:

- There is good classroom organisation
- There are clear and efficient classroom routines
- There are clear and consistent boundaries and rules for pupils which are applied in a fair and consistent way
- All pupils have an input into devising the classroom rules and these rules are displayed within the classroom. The children are reminded of them regularly
- The rules are kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what the pupils should do
- There is a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour

Playground:

Within the playground:

- Children are supervised by a rota system consisting of the principal, teachers and SNAs. There is always at least two adults on supervisory duty in the playground at all times
- The principal, teachers and SNAs have a role in promoting good behaviour and dealing with inappropriate behaviour in the playground
- There is explicit teaching of positive behaviour expected in the playground so that children are clear what activities and behaviours are expected.
- There are zones/timetables within the playground for each class to play and these zones/timetables are clearly displayed in the staffroom and in the classroom
- While in the playground, children must ask permission to use the toilets from a staff member.
- Any issues regarding minor incidents must be reported to the class teacher by the staff member that is a witness to the incident. More serious incidents are recorded in the incident book and appropriate class teacher consulted. Persistent minor behaviours will be recorded by the class teacher
- All children will line up when the bell rings in an orderly and timely manner.
- For wet days, children remain in their classrooms and each classroom has suitable games to play or online films/programmes. All classes are supervised

Other Areas of the School:

- There is early morning supervision where children are supervised in the small yard for ten minutes prior to the bell. This is not a playtime. Two adults are on supervisory duty at this time
- No running allowed in corridors at any time
- Children are required to walk in an orderly fashion when going from class to Gym/Library/Yard and are supervised in doing so
- Some children who are deemed to need constant supervision are supervised on leaving the classroom to the front gate where they are collected by parents
- Children only go to the toilet during class time one by one and are supervised within reason and diligently as possible at all other times

School Related Activities:

- After school training is supervised
- During school matches a teacher is accompanied by an S.N.A.
- After school music: children waiting for lessons are supervised by a teacher
- Swimming trips are supervised by teachers, SNA and swimming instructor employed by the school i.e. for male changing room
- School tours/nature walks are supervised by teachers and SNAs.

Rewards & Sanctions:

- Each individual teacher has an individual reward system in their classroom. i.e. stars etc
- All achievements/good behaviour are acknowledged during assembly time for example good behaviour during school events such as matches, Scór competitions
- Parents are also informed of how well their children behave in the school term Newsletter

Three Categories of Misbehaviour

In Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire, behaviours are divided into three categories:

- Minor Misbehaviour
- More Serious Misbehaviour
- Gross Misbehaviour

Examples of minor misdemeanours and gross misbehaviour include:

- Disrupting the work or play or others
- Running in school building
- Talking in class
- Leaving seat without permission
- Littering
- Not obeying lunch-time and classroom rules
- Not completing homework
- Possession of mobile phone (Mobile phones will be confiscated and will only be returned to a Parent/Guardian)
- Not treating other children/adults with respect.

Examples of more serious misdemeanours include;

- Persistently breaking school/classroom rules
- Stealing
- Bullying in all forms
- Leaving school without permission
- Disrespectful language or behaviour towards an adult
- Substance use
- Damaging school or others property
- Aggressive behaviour
- Causing physical harm to another child/adult

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- Fighting
- Being in possession of items that may cause damage to persons or property

The above lists are not exhaustive and are only examples.

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor/more serious/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.

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

- Each individual teacher has sanctions pertaining to his/her own class
 1. Verbal caution
 2. Written note in diary for parents and also informal discussion with parents where necessary
 3. Removal from the group and withdrawal of privileges
- Where behaviour continues to be serious or inappropriate a child may be
 1. Sent to the Principals office for a warning/advice
 2. A second visit to the Principal re the same behaviour may warrant the Principal contacting the parents
 3. Meeting with Parents/Principal/Class Teacher
 4. Chairperson of the B.O.M. maybe asked to attend if a further meeting is deemed necessary
 5. Suspension
 6. Expulsion

Involving Parents in Management of Problem Behaviour

- Initially Parents are contacted as soon as possible by the class teacher informally, initially
- Strategies are put in place with parents regarding help and advice to overcome difficulties being experienced by the child
- The child may be present for part of this meeting and may be asked to sign an agreement regarding his/her behaviour i.e. school agreement form
- Parents are encouraged to make further appointments with class teacher/principal if they still have concerns relating to their child

Where behaviour continues to be serious or inappropriate a child maybe

- Sent to the Principals office for a warning/advice
- A second visit to the Principal re the same behaviour may warrant the Principal contacting the parents
- Meeting with Parents/Principal/Class Teacher
- Chairperson of the B.O.M. may be asked to attend if a further meeting is deemed necessary
- A reduced school day for a child is necessary when the child persistently disrupts the learning environment

A child may attend school for the morning period up to 10.45a.m. When their behaviour improves, it will merit an increase in their time spent in school e.g. up to 12.30p.m. We aim for full attendance for this child

- When a child assaults (bite, strike, stab and kick) with force a teacher, SNA or any adult in the school environment, it is deemed necessary to send the child home immediately. (on the second incident if the child is in Junior Infants). This temporary removal will be made on the following day if parent cannot be contacted on day of incident. This can be done without contacting Board of Management
- Suspension authorised by the Board of Management – suspension for a longer period may be deemed necessary in response to a gross misdemeanour

Managing Aggressive or Violent Behaviour

- Children with emotional issues are immediately referred to the SET Team for specialist intervention. (with parental consent)
If the SET intervention is deemed inadequate for the child's needs, the child will be referred for psychological assessment (CAMHS)
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available i.e. Health Service Executive, NEPS etc
- S.E.T. personnel may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour
- Individual behaviour plans for specific children are created by class teachers in collaboration with SET teachers
- Professional development is available to staff e.g. SESS, Colleges of Education, ICEP (Prof Excel) courses, Education Centres, notice of any courses is shared with all staff and staff are facilitated to attend

SUSPENSION

Suspension is defined as 'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days' (NEWB guidelines). Exclusion for part of a school day, as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a student from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension.

Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a student has engaged in a **serious** or **gross misbehaviour**. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, a single instance of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

- The seriously detrimental effect on the education of the other students of the student's behaviour to date;
- Whether the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety;
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The purpose of suspension:

The purpose of suspension includes: providing a respite for staff and students, giving the student time to reflect on their actions and the staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change their behaviour. Suspension shall be used as part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour.

The procedures in respect of suspension are those outlined in section 11.5 of the NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'. While the BoM has the authority to suspend, they may delegate this authority to the principal for periods of up to three days. If a suspension for a longer period is being proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB guidelines.

A record of suspension incidents will be kept in the school.

School will endeavour to ensure fair procedure to include the right to be heard and to impartiality.

The process will include the following stages;

- Investigation of the facts to confirm serious/gross misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident
- Parents will be given the opportunity to respond

If suspension is still decided upon:

Principal notifies parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
- The provision for appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES, if the suspension period brings the cumulative period of suspension to 20 days or longer in the school year (section 29, Education Act 1998, amended 2007)

Suspension will be implemented in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

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 of behaviour and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

EXPLUSION (permanent exclusion)

Expulsion is a very serious step and will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour which may include:

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

In the event of expulsion being considered by the Board of Management fair procedure and procedures prescribed by the Education Welfare Act 2000 will be followed.

Procedures for expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious/gross 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.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel 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 the student.

The Appeals process

The appeals process under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (current DES guidance).

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Review of use of Expulsion

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

Visitors/Parents Behaviour

- Gardaí will be called for any visitors/parents who display aggressive behaviour towards staff
- A full report will be filed

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- ❖ Positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- ❖ Practices and procedures listed in the policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- ❖ Positive feedback from teacher, parents and pupils

Implementation Date: 7th September 2016

Reviewed and ratified: 14th June 2023

Signed: _____

Chairperson BOM

For and on behalf of board of management

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____

APPENDIX 1

Code of Behaviour Amendment – Covid 19

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, pupils are expected to follow specific rules and procedures. Therefore, there is a need to amend the school Code of Behaviour.

Unacceptable Behaviour which will not be tolerated:

- Coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
- Teasing or taunting another child about Covid 19
- Unwanted invasion of personal space

The behaviours listed above will be dealt with in line with the Code of Behaviour.

School Routines

Pupils are required to:

- Follow any altered routine for arrival or departure
- Follow instructions on who pupils can socialise with at school
- Follow instructions on staying within pod and remaining at table
- Remain within bubble of their class grouping, as per specific instructions
- Not to share any equipment or other items including drinking bottles

Failure to abide by these procedures will result in referring to the Code of Behaviour.

Hygiene and Health Expectations

Pupils are expected to:

- ✓ Tell an adult if you are experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus
- ✓ Follow school instructions on hygiene such as hand washing and sanitising
- ✓ Use proper etiquette when sneezing and coughing (catch it, bin it, kill it)
- ✓ Use correct procedure for the disposal of tissues
- ✓ Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands.

Review

The code has been discussed at a staff meeting, parents and 6th class pupils were consulted and reviewed by B.O.M. Included is the amendment of Code of Behaviour – Covid 19 (Appendix 1)
Ratification & Commencement

Implemented: 30th September 2021