

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is

- to protect the constitutional rights of all children to an education free from disruptive negative behaviour and general misconduct
- to encourage a reformed attitude towards misconduct and disruptive, negative behaviour.

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. 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.

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.

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A. Aims of the code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem and positive, caring and respectful relationships.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child 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 this policy.
- To ensure fair and respectful treatment for all regardless of age, gender, religion, disability, race, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or membership of the traveler community.

B. Responsibility of Adults

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.

All Adults should engage and support the aims of this policy by creating a secure, happy, pleasant atmosphere in the school community, striving to cater and provide for the individual needs of the children.

Problems with conduct at school may be related to circumstances at home. Parents/Guardians may need to inform teachers of issues that could impact on school behaviour.

C. Rules of Behaviour

These rules apply during school time or at any school related activity (library visits, tours, outings etc).

- We show respect for self and others, and their learning
- We show respect for our own property, the property of others and the school environment
- We show kindness and are willing to help others
- We follow instructions from staff respectfully
- We walk quietly in the school building
- We show courtesy and good manners
- We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- We ask permission to leave the classroom
- We do our best in class
- We take responsibility for our own behaviour

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These can be summed up as:

1. We listen. We don't interrupt.
2. We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
3. We are honest. We tell the truth.
4. We are kind.
5. We work hard. We don't waste time.
6. We look after property. We don't damage things.

D. **Playground Behaviour**

Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. Pupils are permitted to use equipment as designated by the school. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited.

Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without permission of the supervising teacher, this includes re-entering the school building.

The playground and school environment should be litter free and tidy. Pupils are not allowed to bring food wrappers outside.

Pupils should walk to their classroom when the bell rings.

E. **Incentives/Reward System**

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
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly.

F. **Unacceptable Behaviour**

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/guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour. Teachers will keep a record of repeated minor/serious and gross misbehaviours and related meetings with parents/guardians.

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G. Examples of Misbehaviour

Examples of Minor Misbehaviour:

- Unnecessary talking in class- causing disruption to others e.g. speaking out of turn
- Shouting or talking loudly
- Non-completion of assigned class-work without good reasons
- Poor presentation of work
- Displaying defiant, cheeky or sulky behaviour
- Not following instructions.
- Playing games considered dangerous to oneself or others
- Causing annoyance or bodily harm to other pupils by pushing, kicking, tripping etc.
- Behaviour that shows a lack of respect
- Bringing in chewing gum
- Using skateboards, scooters, bicycles or roller blades/skates on the school grounds

Examples of Serious Misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is rude or shows a lack of respect
- Use of inappropriate language
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Use of electronic equipment or mobile-phones in school without permission. *Use of mobile phones and electronic equipment without permission is strictly forbidden; all electronic items must be switched off and kept in school bags at all times. Any infringement of the rule will involve the confiscation of the phone or other electronic equipment and will only be returned to a parent/ guardian of the pupil.*
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour or physical harm to oneself or another person
- Damage to property and mistreating the school environs
- Theft
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Use of offensive weapons or any object or implement, including toy guns, stones, toy knives or real knives in an aggressive or threatening manner towards other pupils or members of staff or anyone else.
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.
- Repeated displays of minor misbehaviour.

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Examples of Gross Misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil (written/ physical/ verbal)
- Use of offensive weapons or any object or implement, including toy guns, stones, toy knives or real knives to inflict injury on any other pupil or members of staff or anyone else.
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Damage to property
- Serious Theft
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes
- Substance abuse
- Repeated displays of serious misbehavior

H. Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- reinforcing the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signalling to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.
- helping to prevent further disruption to teaching and learning.

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. Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

- Verbal warning including advice on how to improve
- Visual warning
- Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened with parent/guardian signature
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
- Class teacher communication with parents/ guardians
- Referral to Principal
- Principal and class teacher communicating with parents/guardians
- Loss of privileges
- 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)

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I. Suspension and Expulsion

The purpose of suspension is to demonstrate the seriousness of the misbehaviour to both the parent/guardian and the pupil concerned with a view to agreeing steps to modify the behaviour(s) concerned. Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the welfare and education of other pupils.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to safety or the pupil is responsible for severe damage to property.
- The matter in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act.

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

Where there are grounds for suspension:

- The Chairperson of the Board of Management, the student and his/her parents/guardians will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension.
- The matter will be investigated by the relevant school staff and detailed records are kept.
- Parents/Guardians of the pupil concerned are requested in writing to attend a meeting with relevant school staff where they are provided with details of the complaint(s) and are afforded an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and a sanction is imposed. If the parents/guardians 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.
- In cases where parents/guardians do not agree to attend such a meeting, a formal letter will be issued advising parents/guardians of the gravity of the matter and the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to arrive at a decision in response to the pupil's negative behaviour.
- Following the investigation and discussion with the parents/guardians, the Principal then addresses the matter at Board of Management meeting.
- The parents/ guardians are informed of the decision reached by letter and where possible by phone.

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

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In the case of gross misbehaviour or a single incident of serious misconduct, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board of Management 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/guardians. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the suspected outcomes.

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.

J. Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/guardian may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/ guardian must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code of conduct 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.

K. Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents/guardians are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent/guardian or student (DES Circular 22/02). The Principal and designated Board member will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02-Processing an Appeal).

L. Children with Special Educational Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of conduct. However, the school recognises that children with special educational needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans may be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians and all other relevant parties.

M. Role of The Board of Management

'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school.' (Dept. of Education and Science Circular 20/90). The Board supports the implementation and review of this code in an open and inclusive manner.

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N. Role of Teachers & Auxiliary Staff

- To create a positive climate with realistic expectations and ample opportunities for praise
- To promote, through example, honesty, courtesy and respect.
- To provide a caring and effective learning environment
- To encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- To ensure fair treatment for all
- To show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- To co-operate in implementing this policy in a consistent and fair manner
- To give pupils in their care the opportunity to explore and further understand the behaviour expected of them in school and throughout society
- To place the emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions
- To foster and encourage a strong-sense of community and co-operation between staff, pupils, parents/guardians and Board of Management.

The Principal under the direction of the Board of Management has overall responsibility in ensuring that this Code of Conduct is implemented in a fair and positive manner.

O. Role of Parents/Guardians

- To ensure their child's punctuality and regular attendance
- To equip their child with appropriate school materials and a healthy lunch
- To promote respect for teachers and other school personnel
- To be available to discuss and listen to any issues which may arise
- To explain the Code of Conduct to their child/children
- To become familiar with school rules and to follow them
- To show support for teachers in their implementation of this Code of Conduct
- To be courteous towards all school personnel and pupils
- To keep in contact with teachers regarding their child's progress
- To support their child in their schoolwork and homework. Check up on their child's homework daily and provide a written note if homework has not been completed for a valid reason
- Communicate with the school regarding factors which may affect their child's behaviour
- To adhere to the school's grievance procedure for parents/ guardians.
- To adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) regarding social media
- Parents/guardians are not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises. If a parent/guardian has specific concerns regarding the behaviour of another child, please contact the class teacher or Principal.

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P. Communicating with Parents/Guardians

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to addressing children's behaviour. Parents/guardians and teachers can work together to develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties. A high-level of co-operation and open communication is a key factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. If a parent has any concerns or queries we would ask that these are communicated appropriately with the class teacher in the first instance.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed, all class teachers are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties.

The following methods of communication regarding behaviour may be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/guardian-teacher communication
- Through pupil's homework journal (Junior and Senior Infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- Telephone call
- Letters/notes/e-mails from school to home and from home to school

Q. Absences

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief written note and signed by a parent/guardian. Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to the Education Welfare Board. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents/guardians with attendance issues.

Parents/Guardians must contact the class teacher/school in advance of their child wishing to leave school early, briefly explaining the reason, the time that the pupil will be collected and the name of the person who will be collecting them.

Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. School opens to receive at 8.20 am each morning. Parents/Guardians of a pupil should contact the school on the first day of absence. After a pupil has been absent, we are legally required to obtain a note of explanation from the parent/guardian upon the pupil's return to school.

Related policies available on request:

Anti-Bullying Policy
Enrolment Policy
Child Protection Policy
Acceptable Use Policy- ICT
School Attendance Policy
Grievance Procedures for Parents/ Guardians