

Code of Behaviour

Scoil Mhuire, Lios Breac

1. Introduction

This Code of Behaviour was reviewed by all staff of Scoil Mhuire in January 2022.

2. Rationale

The Staff of Scoil Mhuire decided to review the Code of Behaviour at this time to ensure that it remains compliant with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008* and also as a response to the impact of Covid 19 on our school. It is a requirement under the *Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1)* which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23 (2), that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school;
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

3. Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Scoil Mhuire aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of each child. This can only be achieved where there is a high level of respect and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

4. Formulation

The formulation of this policy will be a collaborative process between teachers, parents, Board of Management and pupils as appropriate. Pupils will be involved in drawing up a Classroom Charter.

Amendments can then be submitted to the Board of Management for their consideration. (Please note final authority rests with the Board of Management in accepting or rejecting such amendments)

This Policy will be supported by the following School Policies:

- Anti Bullying,
- Attendance
- Healthy Eating
- Homework

- Social, Personal and Health Education
- Enrolment - policy
- Health & Safety
- Child Safeguarding.

5.Circulation

This revised Policy will be circulated in draft form to Board of Management. When sanctioned a copy of this Policy will be kept by each teacher. Parents of new applicants will be given a copy on their child's enrolment and enrolment is dependent on the acceptance of this policy. This policy will also be made available to parents on our website page under th Downloads section. A hard copy will be given if requested.

6.Responsibility for the implementation

The policy will be monitored by the following:

- Principal Teacher
- Post holders
- Teachers
- Ancillary Staff
- Parents
- Pupils

7.Aims

- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of Their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing 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

Pupil Responsibilities

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and the property of others and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
- Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.

- Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing via / via Aladdin, stating the reason for absence.
- Remain in delegated areas of the school grounds and socially distancing to the best of their ability, if such guidelines are in place.
- To co-operate with all staff members in relation to new Covid 19 Guidelines, both inside the school building and on the school yard.
- Obey both classroom rules and school rules

Parents/Guardians Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians are expected to be familiar with the school rules and to -

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, for their own property and that of others.
- Ensure that children attend school and are punctual and prepared for school.
- Support and encourage their children's school and homework
- Ensure children adhere to both class and school rules and to offer support to the school in the disciplining of the child should these rules be broken.
- Attend for any meetings arranged to discuss their child and to inform the school of anything that may have an impact on their child's behaviour at school.
- In the event of remote learning coming into effect again, to engage and co-operate with the school in this regard.

Whole school approach to promote positive behaviour

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out of school activities. Senior students have a role to play in modelling good behaviour.

8. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. 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, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this Code is respect - respect for ourselves and others and their property. The school expects the highest standards of behaviour from all in the school community.

Relationships with the child's parent(s)

Building and maintaining a good working relationship with the parents of a child with behaviours of concern is always in the very best interests of the child. This relationship must be based on honesty, integrity, trust and a mutual desire to do everything possible to facilitate and promote the child's learning.

In order to encourage better long-term relationship between home and school that will make working with the parents much easier, all meetings around the child's behaviours should be based on

- Framing all discussions around the needs of the child and his/her exhibitions of distress in the classroom
- Expressing concern about the fact that the child, through his/her behaviour, is isolating her/himself socially in the classroom
- Encouraging the parents to share whatever background information they may have which might assist the school in alleviating the child's anxieties and behaviours of concern
- Assuring the parents/guardians that we are there to help and will work together every step of the way
- Stating clearly to them that there is no negative judgement being made about them as parents, but that the meeting displays a desire and a willingness on the school's behalf to improve the situation for all (child, family, peers, bus escort, bus driver, teacher, SNAs, school community) involved.

The School's Commitment to the parents and their child

- Make the parents aware of the ethos and vision of the school and how these apply to the education of their child and to meeting her/his needs
- Assure the parents that they are the primary educators of the child and that the school wishes to work with them in relation to their child accessing the curriculum
- Put the parents at ease and assure them that the school will do all that it can within its resources to provide a quality teaching and learning experience for their child
- If applicable, assure parents that the child's needs in relation to settling into a new school environment are the school's main priority. These may include:
 - o Ability to cope socially with a new and unfamiliar setting
 - o Separation anxiety.

The School's Capacity to meet the needs of the child

- Discuss with the parents the needs of the child and the ability of the child to adapt to the school setting. Some children will exhibit behaviours of concern arising from

distress or anxiety due to their inability to cope with what they perceive to be the overwhelming experience of being in a mainstream classroom. In such cases, it is important that both parents and school recognise children in such situations can respond by displaying behaviours of concern as a coping mechanism. Parents should be aware that such behaviours, where they are aggressive or violent, will often frighten other children and cause further social isolation

- Assess with the parents what learning or social needs the child may have in relation to attending school
 - Seek and receive full co-operation from the parents in relation to how the school will work with them and their child to meet his/her needs
 - Receive all relevant data pertaining to the child's behavioural issues so that the school can begin to understand the reasons why the child is behaving as s/he does
 - Make the parents aware of the role of NCSE and the SENO and ask for all relevant data which might assist the school in seeking the required resources from NCSE or DES in relation to their child
 - Work with parents to design and teach the child alternative and more socially acceptable responses/behaviours for the child. These new responses or behaviours will promote better acceptance by peers and a stronger, positive relationship with teachers.
 - Ensure that the parents are aware that the school's first function is to ensure a physically and psychologically safe environment for all children
 - The purpose of creating such a safe environment is to provide the best possible environment conducive to teaching and learning
 - Make the parents aware of the school website and where they can read the school policies in this regard. If deemed necessary, provide parents with copies of the relevant policy/policies.

The School's Discipline and Behaviour Policy

- Ensure that the parents are aware of the school's Behaviour, Discipline and Bullying Policies and that they support and accept these policies.
- Advise parents of their important role in supporting their child's compliance with these policies.

Parents Understanding and Commitment to the School Ethos and Values

Open and transparent communication is key to trust between parents and school. It is vitally important that the parents of a child with behaviours of concern clearly understand and support the school's ethos and values in relation to respecting:

- Teaching, support and ancillary staff
- The right of other children to be educated in a safe environment

- Possible concerns of parents of children who may be intimidated by behaviours of concern.

Parents of a child with behaviours of concern must commit to ensuring that their child is made fully aware of these concerns and encouraged to respect other children and all school staff.

Advise parents that a Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians must be signed.

Recording of Behaviours of Concern

Where behaviours of concern are an issue, ensure that the parents are aware of the school's policy and procedures on recording such behaviours. Parents should understand that the school seeks to record and analyse these behaviours to understand what the triggers are and to put in place a plan to support the child to develop more socially acceptable behaviours. Parents should be assured that they will be fully included in this process. It is important to emphasise that children who exhibit behaviours of concern make life difficult for themselves and inhibit social interaction with their classmates.

Behaviours will be analysed and a behaviour plan will be drawn up for a child where relevant.

At the first sign of a behaviour of concern

At the first sign that a pupil is displaying behaviours of concern, the following steps should be taken immediately by the class teacher:

- Ensure the safety of the child and the other children
- Document the behaviour for later analysis
- Consult with the child's parents to ascertain if anything has changed at home to cause the behaviour and to enlist their assistance at the earliest possible moment.

If the behaviour continues

Document and Analyse - continue documenting and begin to analyse the behaviours.

Consult with the following to try to "get ahead" of the behaviour by seeking an early understanding of the underlying causes and to find out what worked and, more importantly, what did not work with this particular child in relation to the behaviour:

- SENCO in larger schools
- Principal, directly, in smaller schools
- SET, if involved · Previous Class Teacher or SETs
- SNAs who have worked with the pupil in the past
- Parents to ascertain if they can shed further light on the cause of the behaviour

Review previous reports and notes about the pupil to see if there has been any earlier indication of the behaviour.

If the situation escalates

Sometimes a child will revert to their more "normal" behaviour when some small changes are put in place as a result of the steps taken. However, if the situation escalates, the following steps must be considered:

- **Inform** Principal and SENCO
- **Document and Analyse** - continue documenting and continue to analyse the behaviours
- **Prepare for a Meeting** with the child's parents. Inform the principal of your need to meet with the parents and outline your plan to him/her. Decide if the class teacher alone will meet with the parents or if the principal, SET or SENCO should also be present
- If it felt necessary, assess the risk of injury to the child involved, to other children and adults
- **Meet** with the parents. Be clear in the message you want them to receive, use caring but concise language. Have a clear description of the behaviour you want to target and stick to that description. Explain how it is affecting their child's education (and other children too if relevant). Explain the steps you want to take with their assistance. Ensure they know the entire process that will be followed should the behaviours escalate, but again emphasise that you are there to help.

Making a plan

If appropriate a **Positive Behaviour Plan** can be put into place. This is where short-term strategies are agreed and implemented by class teams, principal and parents to ensure a consistent approach to managing/modifying a particular behaviour of concern. It is essential that any adult interacting with the child knows the language to use and response to make should an incident occur. If necessary, inform all staff of steps to take (or not to take) should they be nearby when an incident occurs.

What are the options when the school is struggling to meet the needs of the child?

Every single case is different but when the behaviour of one pupil is seriously affecting their own education and that of the other pupils, then further actions should be taken. This may include a discussion with the parents on the placement of the pupil in a specialised setting. It may also include expulsion as a very last resort.

How do we know that the placement is no longer working?

Unfortunately, it sometimes happens that a child does not benefit from his/her placement in a particular school setting. This will be evidenced by the fact that despite the best and exhaustive efforts of parents and school staff, the child continues to exhibit behaviours which inhibit the teaching and learning of that child and/or the other children in the class. At that stage, both parents and school must consider if the continuance of that placement is actually harming the child and causing him/her distress.

Reaching such a conclusion is predicated on evidence-based records and frequent meetings between parents and the school staff involved. It can only be reached when the school has put in place all available resources to facilitate the child overcoming his/her behaviours of concern. Interventions must be given adequate time for success and diligently recorded.

A thorough, honest and brave examination of the actions taken by the school staff and management should be undertaken to see if everything possible has been done to ensure the well-being and safety of all children and staff in the school. This will mean evaluating current school practices in the light of dealing with the needs of the child in question, and not being afraid to alter these practices if they are found wanting.

Shortened school day

The effect of going to school and being involved in a classroom situation can be traumatic for some children who have social anxieties. School leaders need to clearly discuss such anxieties with parents, where the parents inform the school or where it becomes apparent when the child starts in the school. Both parents and school leaders must be conscious of both the benefits to the child in being in school and also the challenging and potentially detrimental effect it may have on a child with social anxieties. In such cases, it may be beneficial to consider graduating a child's exposure to school to facilitate an easier transition from home to school.

Parents and school leaders will need to devise a plan to deal for occasions where it is not possible for a child to remain in school for the duration of the full school day. A short-term restricted day, dictated by the needs of the child, may have to be considered. Where such a plan is necessary, the parents and school leader should formulate the plan together and accept it by signature. It is very important that such a plan is time-bound and is reviewed on a weekly basis. The SENO and EWO should be notified of such a plan and asked to provide additional home tuition for the child.

Suspension

The school at all times retains its right and its obligation to implement its Code of Discipline, up to and including Suspension or even Expulsion if deemed necessary as last resorts.

All pupils are subject to the Disciplinary Code and sometimes, in cases of serious/gross misconduct involving harm to others or serious damage to property, the BoM may have no option but to resort to suspension. The decision to suspend a pupil must be justified on serious grounds. Such a determinations by the School Principal/Deputy Principal/BoM that the:

- Pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to his/her own safety and the safety of others in the school community
- Pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on his/her own education and the education of other pupils
- Pupil is responsible for serious damage to school property
- A single incident of serious/gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Expulsion - as outlined in this policy

The decision to expel a pupil must be justified on serious grounds. Such a determination by the School Principal/Deputy Principal/BOM that:

- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to his/her own safety and the safety of others in the school community
- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect his/her own education and the education of other pupils
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to school property

A single incident of serious/gross misconduct may be grounds for expulsion.

It is important that the school would be able to accurately account for:

- The behaviours which have led to the BoM considering expulsion
- The measures which have been taken by the school to assist the pupil overcome these behaviours
- The assistance sought from outside agencies - e.g. NEPS, NCSE (SESS), NBSS, etc.

Such accounting will be dependent on the level and quality of recording related to the behaviours of concern.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the BoM in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate, meeting with parents and pupil to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour:

- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. NEPS, HSE Community Services, NBSS, CAMHS, NCSE).

9. Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological, or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. This will not be tolerated and parents are expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

10. Other Matters

The following items are not allowed in school

- Any item which could cause injury to themselves or others.
- Mobile phones
- No recording enabled devices such as watches that can take photos/record.
- Computer/Electronic Games
- Personal Money. If it is necessary for pupils to bring money to school to pay for books, swimming, insurance, trips etc. the pupil will give the money to the teacher before the start of formal lessons and the teacher will store the money in a secure place.

11. Four Stay Safe Steps

The following 4 'Stay Safe Steps' will be taught in each Class, so that each pupil will know what to do when in an 'Unsafe' situation.

1. Say no
2. Get away
3. Tell someone
4. Keep telling.....

12. Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Incentives

Part of the vision of Scoil Mhuire is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. All children are encouraged to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to 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 are as high as for work.

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 exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege

13. Classification of Misbehaviours

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. Every effort will be made to resolve behaviours in as few steps as possible.

Misbehavior falls into one of three categories - minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age and vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour.

The following are examples of minor misbehaviours

- Distracting other pupils:
- Out of seat without permission:
- Unruliness on corridors:
- Running in school building
- Name calling/objectable comments about other pupils:
- Rowdiness/horseplay:
- Ignoring teacher's instructions
- *Interrupting class work*
- *Talking out of turn*
- *Not wearing the correct school uniform*
- *Littering around the school*
- *Being discourteous or unmannerly*
- *Not completing homework without good reason*
- *Inappropriate behaviours or gestures*
- *Telling lies....(this list is not exhaustive)*

The following steps may be taken to deal with minor misbehaviours -

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Note in homework diary to be signed at home or via online platform / Classdojo / Seesaw

Incidents on yard reported to class teacher, Student Behaviour Reflection Form complete and sign if necessary

3. Temporary separation from peers / Sending to another teacher / Denial of participation in some class activity

For repeated / ongoing minor misbehaviours which are not resolved by steps 1-3
Send to Principal - misdemeanour entered on file and parents contacted.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Theft
- Bullying
- *Constantly telling lies*
- *Persistently not working to their full potential*
- *Damaging others' property/ Damaging school property*
- *Answering back a staff member*
- *Continuously not completing homework*
- *Endangering themselves or other pupils*
- *Using unacceptable language/ Deliberate/continual disobedience/ Spitting*
(this list is not exhaustive)

All cases of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

The following steps may be taken to deal with serious misbehaviours

- Send to Principal - misbehaviour entered on file.
- Principal sends Reflection Form to be signed by parent and contacts parents by phone.
- Internal Suspension may be used - sent to another class for a day.
- Principal and class teacher where necessary meets with one/both parents and will be informed that the child may be suspended.
- The parents will be asked to undertake a formal agreement that the behaviour will improve
- Brought to the attention of Board of Management informed (Bullying incident).

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- *Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school*
- *Smoking*
- *Persistently engaging in activities that have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate*
- *Leaving school premises without permission*
- *Deliberately injuring any member of the school community*
- *Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or another pupil*
- *Vandalism*
- *Serious inappropriate behaviour*
(this list is not exhaustive).

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

The following steps may be taken to deal with gross misbehaviour

1. Principal / Deputy Principal or relevant Post Holder to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
2. When a child has been suspended parents must remove the child immediately from the school building/grounds
3. The parents will be given all relevant information in writing, the reason for the suspension, the duration of it and the expected return date of the child to school
4. Expulsion considered in an extreme cases (Rule 130 (6))
5. Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community, eg. Community Care services provided by Health Boards at the SESS.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures may still be applied.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

Procedures in respect of suspension

1. Inform the student and their parents about the complaint
2. Give parents and student an opportunity to respond

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

Suspension and Expulsion

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 teacher 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 or 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, 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.

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

Removal of suspension

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 Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management, Principal, teachers, pupils and parents have a responsibility to support and implement this policy

Success criteria

The success of this policy will be determined by

- feedback from teacher's pupils and parents
- observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridors and yard.

Implementation date

This policy will be implemented following ratification by the B.O.M.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and amended, as necessary.

Ratification /Communication

This policy is circulated to all parents of children enrolled. This policy was reviewed and ratified on the _____.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Student Behaviour Reflection Form	Student name:	Class:
	Time of incident:	Date:
The school rule I chose not to follow		
What happened		
My reasons		
How did this make me feel		
How did this make the other person feel		
How could I make it better		
What I could have done differently		
Student signature: _____ Date: _____		
Teacher signature: _____ Date: _____		

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Parent(s)/Guardian(s) signature: _____ Date: _____