



Code of Behaviour

Introduction

The aim of this code is :

- To achieve the safe and efficient operation of the school at all times.
- To establish the right of each individual child to a quality education in a safe environment.
- To develop self-discipline in all pupils and a sense of care and courtesy towards others.
- To instil a respect for school buildings, school property and the general school environment.
- 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, while recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

Standards of behaviour expected in this school:

- Be kind and helpful, don't hurt peoples feelings
- Show courtesy and good manners, don't be rude
- Be gentle, don't hurt anyone
- Listen, don't interrupt
- Work hard, don't waste your or others time
- Be honest, don't cover up the truth
- Look after property, don't waste or damage things

These are displayed in the GP room and referred to at each school assembly.

It is recognised that factors influence children's behaviour and may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated.

As per section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare Act, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the principal '*may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child*'.

The code of behaviour is communicated to parents on the enrolment of their child through the information booklet given on enrolment.

Parents can support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour:

- Parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- Parents regularly check the home journal for any communication from the teacher and likewise teachers check it
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Parents provide a healthy lunch in compliance with the schools healthy eating policy
- Parents support is requested in ensuring the children wear the correct school uniform

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

The rules are kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what pupils should do.

Classroom rules

Classroom rules are devised in accordance with the standards of behaviour in the school. At the beginning of each school year, the class teacher in consultation with the pupils devises classroom rules. These are reinforced on a regular basis and will be displayed in the classrooms. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

All teachers acknowledge and reward good behaviour and implement sanctions for misbehaviour as per the school policy.

Our classroom management techniques ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation and to suit all learning styles.

Playground rules

- Play safely and stay in the school grounds at all times
- Always ask an adult to retrieve the ball
- Stop playing when the bell rings and go to your line
- Respect others play and play areas
- Pull-ups and boots must be worn for field play during Winter (3rd – 6th class)
- When playing hurling helmets must be worn and play confined to lower pitch

These will be communicated and explained in the classroom in September and reiterated regularly throughout the year in the classes and at assembly.

A staff rota is in place for supervision and is on display in the staffroom and in each classroom. It usually involves one teacher assisted by an SNA and school secretary, who move around the yard area during break time in order to maximise visibility. Any serious incidents are reported to the teacher, who will deal with it accordingly.

Informal zones are in place for different age groups and different ball games.

On wet days children remain in their own classroom and stay seated. Board games, books and DVDs are available during these breaks. The same supervision applies. Children from the prefab class are allocated to various classrooms.

Children line up in the yard in their lines and are collected by the class teacher.

Children who leave the playground to use the toilets, must ask the teachers permission. The Junior and Senior toilets may be used. Children must not return to the classroom during break time.

Incidents of misbehaviour are written by the child, signed by the parents and retained on file. Serious incidents of misbehaviour will be recorded by the class teacher. Timeout may be used during break time as a sanction.

General school rules

- Bullying in any form will not be tolerated
- The school uniform must be worn at all times
- Attend school on a regular basis and be on time
- Observe the schools healthy eating policy
- Trading cards, phones and electronic games are not allowed
- Homework must be done neatly and as assigned

These will be communicated and explained in the classroom in September and reiterated regularly throughout the year in the classes and at assembly.

School related activities

The code of behaviour applies to all school related activities.

Rewards and sanctions:

All members of staff believe in a positive approach to the question of behaviour and will give constant praise and encouragement for good behaviour, placing greater emphasis on rewards rather than on sanctions.

Rewards:

Rewards are given on an individual or class basis. They are given for good or improved behaviour or achievement.

These are samples of rewards in use in the various classes:

- Praise
- Recognition
- Stamps and stickers
- Homework passes
- Treats
- Golden time
- Principal recognition
- Trips out
- Certificate for good attendance
- Good note home
- Student of the week

Sanctions :

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

- (a) Reasoning with the pupils.
- (b) Reprimand – including advice on how to behave.
- (c) Prescribing additional work to be signed by the parents e.g. asking the child to write down an account of the misbehaviour and to explain why this is unacceptable within the school community.
- (d) Detention during breaks and referral to the Principal.

Some steps may need to be skipped at the discretion of the teacher due to a serious misdemeanour.

Parents will be informed at an early stage rather than as a last resort. If there is not an improvement after c and/or d above, parents will be contacted to attend a meeting with the class teacher to address the matter in a collaborative manner.

From time to time Class Teacher / Principal may keep behaviour profiles for repeat offenders. If the particular misbehaviour persists, it will be necessary to discuss same by calling a meeting between class teacher, child and child's parents. If the misdemeanour is deemed to be serious enough the Principal will also be in attendance.

Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

The following values underpin our school code of behaviour:

- *A Catholic ethos with Christian values where each child is valued for him/herself and mutual respect is fostered at all times*
- *All staff members are aware of the code of behaviour and are consistent in and responsible for its implementation*
- *Regular planning and a whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management will foster active engagement by all students according to their abilities*
- *We promote an inclusive and involved school community where all partners are involved and invited to contribute as appropriate*
- *Our policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or as necessary*

Staff

All staff members were involved in the drafting of the policy. Discussions on behaviour form an element of regular staff meetings. All staff will be given a copy of the revised code of behaviour. All new permanent or temporary staff will be given a copy of the policy in their induction pack. In the event of a child with behavioural difficulties arising from their special needs or otherwise an Individual Behaviour Plan will be drawn up by the teacher in consultation with the student, parents and principal.

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our 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. There is a 2 year cycle in operation for the SPHE programme and each teacher has a copy of the policy. The parents of newly enrolled children are informed about the curriculum and their part in supporting it during the infant induction meeting.

When developing these skills in children this may be done through the drama programme also and activities such as Circle Time, conscience alley and role play are used.

Board of Management

A draft of the reviewed code of behaviour was submitted to the Board of Management for discussion and amendments made as deemed necessary. The BOM are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that the code of behaviour is drafted and implemented in the school.

The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis by visiting the staff regularly and keeping up to date on all activities in the school. A positive relationship exists between the school and members of the BOM with regular visits and dialogue.

The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour by facilitating attendance at courses and being available for consultation and discussion as the need arises.

Procedures are in place for the Board of Management to deal with serious breaches of behaviour as outlined in the sections on suspension and expulsion.

Parents

An open invitation was extended to all parents to attend the school planning day which was addressing the review of the schools code of behaviour. Parents who were unable to attend, were encouraged to submit their suggestions in writing. These were duly noted and taken into consideration when revising the code. *Please note final authority rests with the Board in accepting or rejecting such amendments.*

Pupils

Senior pupils were involved in drafting the code of behaviour through discussion with the class teacher and through circle time sessions with the class teacher and principal.

Pupils play in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour through:

- Children are involved in drafting rules for the classroom each September
- regular assemblies including all pupils where good behaviour is always affirmed and suggestions sought from pupils as how to address areas needing improvement e.g. litter control, anti-bullying initiatives and in monitoring and reviewing the code of behaviour etc
- Buddy systems are in place in September where the senior pupils assist the Junior Infants in becoming familiar with the school rules and how to abide by them

Suspension

Suspension is defined as *requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.*

The Board of Management of Marymount NS has the authority to suspend a student. Where the principal is of the opinion that an immediate suspension is warranted for health and safety reasons, this authority is delegated to the Principal and has been formally and in writing during a BOM meeting and recorded in the minutes.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- 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 'Factors to consider before suspending a student' will be used as per the NEWB guidelines. (See appendix 1)

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension will:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension 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 must still be applied.

Procedure in respect of suspension

The school will observe the following procedures:

- *inform the student and their parents about the complaint*

Let the student and their parents know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents will be informed by phone and in writing.

- *give parents and student an opportunity to respond.*

Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the student and their parents provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The school will record the invitations made to parents and their response.

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 should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.

Period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, a Board of Management may authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion and only where the health and safety of others is at risk.

The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

These provisions enable school authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

Appeals

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management, an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*. At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and should be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal will notify the parents and the student 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
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

Engaging with student and parents

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the student to behave well when the student returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The school will have a plan to help the student and parents to reintegrate into the school following the suspension.

Clean slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Records and reports

Records of investigation and decision-making Formal written records should be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to the Board of Management The Principal should report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to NEWB The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension 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 use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.

The Board of Management of Marymount NS has the authority to expel a student.

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management 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 the student 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

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Expulsion for a first offence

In exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. These could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault.

We as a school recognise the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction and would only implement it in the case of very serious misdemeanours and following a detailed review of all the factors involved by the BOM.

The 'Factors to be considered before proposing to expel a student' will be followed as per the NEWB guidelines pg. 82 (see appendix 2)

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms 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.
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.

(see appendix 3)

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 a 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 (Department of Education and Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

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.

Keeping records

All records are written in a factual and impartial manner.

Class level

- o Teachers are expected to maintain personal records of any incidents of serious misbehaviour.
- o Where a pupil misbehaves they are required to fill in a standard incident sheet. This is brought home and signed by the parents and returned to the school and filed in the office. If this occurs 3 times parents will be requested to attend a meeting to discuss how the pupil's behaviour can be improved. (see appendix 4)
- o All serious misbehaviour will be informally reported to the principal.
- o The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour, where behaviour is reported as being excellent, very good, good, fair or poor. Excellent is regarded as adhering to the school rules and code of behaviour. Poor is regarded as regular non-compliance with the code of behaviour. Parents are kept up to date during the year regarding behaviour issues as the need arises.

Playground

- o Supervising staff keep a record of misbehaviour on the yard in the incident book. The book is stored in the office filing cabinet and staff access it when needed. The teacher on duty records any incidents.
- o Regular discussions at staff meetings ensure consistency in the application and interpretation of the rules.

School records

The following records are retained:

- o Copies of communication between school and home. Communication with outside agencies, documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29 and the Board of Management where applicable.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Section 18 of the Education Welfare act stipulates that parents **must** notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents are requested to complete the absence note at the back of the school homework journal following their child's absence and to return this to the class teacher. The slip includes name of pupil, reason for absence and is signed and dated by the parents. The notes are retained in the classroom for the current school year and are destroyed at the end of this period. The returns are made to the NEWB through the on-line method.

The following is a list of strategies that are used to encourage school attendance:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- System for acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications through the infant induction meeting and in the information booklet for parents on enrolment. It is also regularly reiterated in the school newsletter.

Success Criteria

The following are practical indicators of the success of the policy

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Roles and Responsibility

All parties have individual responsibilities for implementing this policy as outlined within the document.

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented from September 1st 2010.

Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually or as the need arises.

Ratification & Communication

The BOM reviewed the policy on **20/09/2018**

Signed:



Fr. Richard Scriven (**Chairperson**)