



Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál, Clondulane

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál
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Code of Behaviour

Content of the School's Code of Behaviour

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1. How our code was developed

This code is a review of a previous code of discipline which was drawn up in 2009.

The present staff reviewed the previous code and reflected on the NEWB's Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008 and) the following Code of Behaviour for our school was drawn up. The views of parents, pupils(Student Council) and management were also sought.

2. Vision

We were cognisant of current practice in the school which we believe is working well and into which students themselves have an input. We felt that we should record our current practice as well as our aspirations for the highest standards of respect and behaviour here with a view to maintaining the best possible educational environment in this school.

3. Relationship to the school mission statement

Our mission statement states that our school is about 'the provision of the optimal learning experience for the children in its care'.

We believe that our code of behaviour is an important part of developing such a school.

Our mission statement also states that the school will be involved in 'the preparation of pupils for active participation in every area of social, economic, professional and civic life.'

We believe that a code of behaviour which is clear, fair and focuses on personal responsibility will develop the school and its community in line with our mission statement.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Boards of Management, Principals, teachers, other school staff, parents and students have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school.

The Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the patron and has a duty to uphold the characteristic spirit of the school, to publish its policies on admissions, participation, suspension and expulsion in a manner that has been agreed. (Education Act 1998).

It is responsible for the school's ethos and should play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours which reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

The Principal The principal is responsible for leading the review of the Code of Behaviour and ensures that it is implemented in the school.



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Teachers and other staff play important roles in the review and updating of the Code. They bring their experience of what works to help students to behave well and their professional expertise to bear in the evaluation and progression of the school as a learning community.

Parents can contribute to the review of the code. Parents can reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school. They can give a consistent message to students about how to treat others.

Students can help develop the code of behaviour for a school. In our school this takes place when students help to formulate class rules, when they watch out for younger pupils in the yard and when they learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

5. Aims of our code of behaviour

In drawing up our code of behaviour we have a number of goals to which a successful code of behaviour can contribute.

These goals include;

- creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
- building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents.
- ensuring that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

6. Principles underpinning an effective code of behaviour

A number of principles underpin an effective code of behaviour. We hope our code of behaviour;

- Utilizes a Restorative Practice approach
- Provides clarity so that everyone in the school community is aware of the school's expectations of how each one can help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning
- Affirms that everyone's behaviour matters
- Focuses on promoting good behaviour
- Our code makes clear that the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students.
- Recognises that the quality of relationships between parents, teachers and students is a powerful influence on behaviour in the school.
- Focuses on personal responsibility
- Ensures fairness and equity



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- Promotes equality for all members of a school community
- Recognises educational vulnerability
- Attends to the welfare of staff and pupils
- Promotes safety and freedom from threat

7. General Guidelines for Behaviour

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both to themselves and to others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times. Respect must be shown at all times. Respect must be shown for the property of the individual and of the school at all times.

Code of Behaviour

The code of Behaviour covers the following areas:

- Behaviour in class
- Behaviour in the playground
- Behaviour in the school environment and behaviour on school outings
- Attendance at school/Education Welfare Act
- Homework after school and extra-curricular activities.

Behaviour in class

Courtesy and respect are essential. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards other pupils or towards a teacher (e.g. defiance, cheek, insolence) are unacceptable. Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour which interferes with the right (e.g. constant disruption of the class persistent distracting of others) is considered unacceptable behaviour.

In order that pupils benefit from their work in class full co-operation is required at all times. Pupils must co-operate with instructions given by the teacher.

The Essential Classroom Rules

1. Be ready for class
2. Good manners are expected at all times
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same
4. Raise hand wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property
6. Ensure you are safe in class and make it safe for others



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Behaviour in the Playground

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. 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 Essential out of Class Rules

1. Stay within the boundaries in yard
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated
3. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
4. Stay clear of fire alarm and respect all school property
5. Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.

Behaviour in the School Environment & Behaviour on School outings

Respect and courtesy to others is essential. Any kind of verbal or physical abuse of other pupils is unacceptable. Use of foul language among pupils is unacceptable. Bullying or intimidation of other pupils is prohibited and is always regarded as a serious offence. Pupils must show respect for school property at all times. For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the school in an orderly manner.

Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school. When on school outings pupils are expected to behave in an orderly manner and show respect for public property. They should always co-operate fully with their teachers and special needs staff.

8. Purpose and content of school rules.

Promoting good behaviour is the goal of the code

Pupils will be given responsibility in the school and will be involved in the development of the code of behaviour eg; in the formulation of class rules and in watching out for each other in the yard and on school trips

Standards which set high expectations for student behaviour will be agreed and implemented in a fair and firm way.



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The standards expect all members of the school community to behave in ways that show respect for others.

Standards of behaviour will reflect values such as;

- Respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

Behaviour which is unacceptable will be outlined so that it is clearly understood by all;

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Each class will have simple class rules which will be;

- Kept to a minimum
- Written in clear, simple language
- Stated positively, telling students what to do, as well as what not to do
- Based on a clear rationale that is explained, understood and agreed
- Developed through consultation with students, parents and staff
- Communicated and referred to regularly

9. Modelling the standards

The adults in the school community have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings with students and with each other since their example is a powerful source of learning for the children. Parents are also expected to model behaviour which children can respect and the way in which they and the teachers of the school interact will provide pupils with a model of good working relationships. Class teachers and specialist personnel will endeavour to communicate school rules to children with special needs in a way that the children can understand and accept.



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10. Attendance/Education Welfare Act

This school encourages parents to send pupils to school unless the child is ill, as we think that absences can impact on the child's progress at school. Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. School opens to receive pupils at 8.50am each morning.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief, written communication to the class teacher and signed by a parent. It is important that parents let the school know of the reasons for a child's absence as the school has a duty to inform the National Educational Welfare Board of all absences and must file a report on those children who miss more than 20 days. The school will inform you in writing if you are approaching, or have surpassed the 20 days. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues.

Any child wishing to leave school early (before 1.40pm/2.40pm) must have written permission signed by their parent and this must be communicated directly with the class teacher. Parents/Guardians must sign out pupils who are collected early from school. Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to the office secretary.

A message will be sent to parents if a child is absent from school via the Aladdin App. The parent is requested to contact the school on the day of absence where possible, the reasons for the child's absence. After a pupil has been absent, communication from the parents must always be sent to the class teacher upon the pupil's return to school. When a pupil has to leave school early (i.e. before 1.40pm /2.40pm) communication from parents must be sent to the class teacher stating the time at which the pupil is to leave. Please refer to School Attendance Policy.

In the event of a long-term absence (due to illness etc.) it would be appreciated if the parents would notify the school as soon as possible if they know that their child is going to be absent so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

11. Homework

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. The time taken for this will vary from child to child, but should in most cases take between 30 minutes and one hour. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. Parents should sign the homework journal to confirm that the work has been fully attempted.

If for some reason homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal.



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Generally, homework is not given at weekends. Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is not permitted. Please refer to the school Homework Policy for further information.

12. Jewellery

Students are permitted to wear stud earrings and watch only.

13. Mobile phones/IPods/Electronic Devices

Use of mobile phones, iPods and electronic devices during school hours is strictly forbidden. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any other electronic equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil.

14. School Uniform

All pupils must wear the school uniform.

15. School journal

The school journal is an important communication tool between parents and the school. Please read and sign the journal each night. Please ensure the personal information page in your school journal is completed.

16. Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.



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17. Systems for acknowledging good behaviour

Students are more likely to behave when they can see why the code is important and that it works in a fair way. Some strategies to promote good behaviour include;

- clear boundaries and rules for students
- good school and class routines
- positive interactions between teachers and students
- helping students to recognise and affirm good behaviour
- recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- exploring with students how people should treat each other
- involving students in the preparation of the school and the classroom rules
- Whole school approach to affirming and rewarding positive behaviour through Class Dojo
- Whole school reward through the GREAT Star Awards

Reward systems may be part of an overall school or class strategy and will be considered and implemented in a fair, meaningful and transparent way by the staff of the school.

18. Consequences of unacceptable behaviour

'When a student's behaviour disrupts the teaching and learning of other students, school authorities have to weigh the needs of that student with the needs of the other students and staff.'

If a pupil is behaving in what the staff consider an inappropriate manner then a problem-solving approach will be used. These steps will be used;

- Gather and record information
- Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening.
- Decide and agree on specific strategies.
- Implement the agreed strategy consistently.
- Review progress: evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention
- Throughout, keep the relationship with the student as positive as possible; involve the pupil and parent.

The elements of a whole school approach to inappropriate behaviour include agreed ways of describing behaviour and recording inappropriate behaviour. Each class teacher and where necessary the principal will maintain a record of behaviour which is considered inappropriate.

Three levels of intervention are outlined in the NEWB guidelines for developing a code of behaviour. At each level it is envisaged that parental and family support should be sought. These include;



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1. Support for all (consistent and clear rules with occasional minor misbehaviour being attended to routinely)
2. Additional support for some students (this may include referral to another teacher for some 'thinking time', behaviour contracts etc.)
3. Specialised support for a minority of students: The principal and staff will build good links with outside agencies if necessary (psychologists, NEWB, HSE community services and An Garda Síochána)

Sanctions will be used if necessary. While the school is adopting a restorative approach sanctions may be required from time to time but will be supported post sanction with a restorative element. The objective of a sanction is to help the student to learn.

Sanctions may include;

- verbal reprimand
- removal from the group
- withdrawal of privileges
- withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group
- carrying out a useful task in the school
- detention during breaks
- formal report to the Board of Management

Inappropriate sanctions include

- physical punishment or threat of same
- ridicule, sarcasm
- public or private humiliation
- applying sanctions to whole groups or classes
- leaving a student in an unsupervised situation while in the care of the school
- sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way



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19. Reference to school policies dealing with bullying and harassment

This school has an anti bullying policy which defines bullying and states that bullying in any form will not be tolerated. All staff will use the SPHE programme(RSE, Stay Safe), the Grow in Love RE programme and other subjects to ensure that every pupil knows what bullying is and why it will not be tolerated in this school. Sanctions will be taken against pupils who bully others in accordance with the Anti-bullying policy and the above guidelines.

20. Policies and procedures for dealing with suspension and expulsion

The school has the right to suspend or expel a pupil. These are serious steps and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the Board of Management and in line with the NEWB's Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools on which this document is based.

Fair Procedures will be followed and the following will be requirements before suspension or expulsion

The following factors will be considered before suspending/expelling a pupil

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension/expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension/expulsion

Timeliness - There will be no undue delays in an investigation

Confidentiality - Care will be taken to ensure that matters relating to misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence

The right to be heard and the right to impartiality will be central to the way the matter is dealt with.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student while at school these will usually be referred to the Gardaí.



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Suspension

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

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.

Where the purpose of a proposed suspension is clearly identified, and that purpose cannot be achieved in any other way, suspension can have value. Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student and give the student time to reflect of the link between their actions and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour.

Pupils will not be suspended for

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the code of behaviour

Procedures in respect of suspension

Parents and pupil will be informed about the complaint in writing or by phone. They will be given an opportunity to respond. In the case of an immediate suspension parents will be notified to ensure that the student is collected. Pupils will only be suspended for up to 3 days unless the principal considers the matter serious enough to warrant a longer suspension and then the Board of Management will be required to give approval.

The suspension may be appealed if the number of days exceeds 20 in the current school year.

Implementing the suspension

The principal will notify the parents and pupil in writing of the decision to suspend in writing. The letter will confirm



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- 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
- arrangements for returning to school
- provision of and appeal to the Board of Management
- right to appeal to the secretary of the Dept. of Education and Science

Records and reports of suspensions will be kept and all suspensions will be notified to the NEWB.

The use of suspension will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management.

Expulsion

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

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. 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.

Normally other interventions will have been tried before expulsion and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

These steps include

- meeting with parents/guardians and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
- making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour
- ensuring that all other options have been tried
- seeking the support of agencies such as the NEWB, Health Board and psychological service

The decision 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 at this time constitutes a real and significant threat to safety



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- 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 interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code include;

- a serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other pupils while in the school
- sexual assault

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a pupil.

Pupils will not be expelled for

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the code of behaviour

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include;

- A detailed investigation will be carried out by the principal.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the principal.
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

A more detailed account of the procedure is contained in the NEWB's Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour pp83-86



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Implementing the expulsion

The principal will notify the parents and pupil of the decision of the Board of Management and of the right to appeal. They will be supplied with the standard form on which to appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel a pupil.

The use of expulsion will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management.

21. Procedures for raising a concern or notifying a complaint about a matter.

The school has a system in place where a complaint or concern can be raised. The principal or teachers will contact parents if they see a need. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns with the relevant teacher. If possible parents are asked to make an appointment to see a teacher. This is to facilitate classroom organisation and to ensure that an appropriate time and place is made available to deal with concerns. Should a matter need to be taken further parents are asked to use the 'Flowchart for Resolving Issues' as a guide. (Appendix B at the end of this Code of Behaviour)
Parents will be made aware of means of how to make formal complaints should the need arise.

22. Reviewing the code

The code will be reviewed every year in the light of experience and in consultation with teachers, parents and pupils.

23. Ratification by the Board of Management

Following discussion among teachers and parents the code will be forwarded to the Board of Management for discussion and ratification.

Chairperson: *Jan O'Brien* Date: *19/6/23*

Principal: *Janey Gullie* Date: *19/6/23*



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Appendix A

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things



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Appendix B

How to raise an issue

