



Scoil Mhuire Gowran

Code of Behaviour

Introduction:

This policy document was drawn up by the staff of Scoil Mhuire, in consultation with the Board of Management and parents/guardians in order to outline our practices and procedures in fostering a positive school culture where good behaviour is supported and promoted.

Rationale:

- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 to prepare a code of Behaviour in respect of the students of the school. This policy ensures compliance with the legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.
- The Code of Behaviour will help the school community to promote our school ethos and will outline procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and help prevent unacceptable behaviour.
- The Code of Behaviour will enable the staff, pupils and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

Relationship to School Ethos:

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount and where we promote the holistic development of the child including academic, physical, moral, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, social & personal development.

Aims:

- 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 well being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

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Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour – roles and responsibilities

The importance of a whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour is paramount to the successful implementation of this policy. The key elements of this approach are:

- Teamwork – involving staff, pupils, parents and the Board of Management
- Ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony and support each other
- A whole school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- An inclusive and involved school community
- An on-going systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy

Pupils can expect to:

- ✓ Be treated fairly, equally and with respect
- ✓ Feel safe
- ✓ Learn in a safe environment
- ✓ Have positive behaviours affirmed
- ✓ Be listened to
- ✓ Have clear boundaries set for them and rules reinforced

Pupils are expected to: (school rules)

- ✓ Be respectful towards other pupils, staff and visitors
- ✓ Walk quietly when entering and leaving the school
- ✓ Listen to all staff when they are spoken to
- ✓ Work to the best of their ability
- ✓ Be truthful and honest at all times
- ✓ Know and follow the school rules and procedures
- ✓ Be mannerly, kind and caring – treat others as you would like to be treated
- ✓ Act responsibly and safely
- ✓ Wear full uniform and flat shoes
- ✓ Leave jewellery at home – watches and stud earring only allowed
- ✓ Respect property

On the playground pupils are expected to: (playground rules)

- ✓ Treat each other with respect
- ✓ Walk to and from the playground
- ✓ Line up in a quiet, straight line when the bell rings
- ✓ Play safely
- ✓ Stay in your own play area

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- ✓ Children must ask permission to leave the yard
- ✓ Follow instructions of all staff

Classroom rules will be devised each September in the respective classes in collaboration with the pupils. Staff members, supported by the Board of Management, adopt a positive approach to discipline within the school. Children are encouraged and praised for their efforts in maintaining discipline.

Staff can expect:

- ✓ To be treated with respect
- ✓ A safe work environment, that is positive and supportive
- ✓ Good standards of behaviour to facilitate good teaching and learning
- ✓ To be listened to
- ✓ Instructions / sanctions to be followed
- ✓ To have the support of colleagues, management and parents

Staff are expected to:

- ✓ Treat everyone fairly and listen to others
- ✓ Be familiar with and implement school rules and policies in a consistent manner
- ✓ Be kind and caring
- ✓ Be respectful and fair
- ✓ Keep pupils safe
- ✓ Create a welcoming, happy and safe environment
- ✓ Be clear with their own expectations
- ✓ Act professionally in dealings with all members of the school community
- ✓ Adhere to the codes of conduct for teachers

Parental support is vital for the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour. Parents are required as a condition of enrolment to confirm their acceptance of the code and to support its implementation.

Parents can expect:

- ✓ A safe place for their children
- ✓ To be treated with respect
- ✓ To be listened to and kept informed
- ✓ To be treated equally, kindly and with respect
- ✓ To be made aware of issues and these to be treated with confidence
- ✓ To be notified of improved or deteriorated behaviour of their children
- ✓ To receive progress reports through parent teacher meetings and end of year reports

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Parents are expected to:

- ✓ Respect and support the school's code of behaviour and other policies
- ✓ Support teachers and staff and have a positive attitude towards the school and homework
- ✓ Have their child in full uniform, with all required materials and a healthy lunch
- ✓ Ensure their child completes their homework and sign the school journal
- ✓ Model a problem solving approach for their children and develop resilience in their children
- ✓ Have their children on time for school and collected on time
- ✓ Ensure their child attends school
- ✓ Communicate to the school any problems or changes in personal circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour
- ✓ Co-operate with teachers and the principal in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty
- ✓ Arrange meetings by appointment

General school strategies

Attendance

- The school grounds will be open to receive pupils at 9.00am
- Junior and Senior Infants will be collected at 2pm unless they travel by bus.
- For the remaining classes, school closes at 3pm.
- Children are to be dropped off and collected punctually.
- **In the interest of safety, management and staff are not responsible for pupils on the school premise before or after these times.**
- A note/ phone call is required if a pupil has been, or will be absent, or if he/ she has to leave during school hours.
- Pupils leaving during the school day have to be signed out in the office.
- Pupil absences in excess of twenty days are reported, as is mandatory, to Tusla.

School Related Activities:

The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour and school procedures apply in any situation where pupils are under the responsibility of the school. These include school tours, swimming, going to and from church, field trips, after school games and concerts etc

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 principal. The 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 individual

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Rewards and sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Our aim is to help children achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially. We place greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results.

The following are some samples of how praise and affirmation is given:

- a quiet word or gesture of praise
- 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 or dojo points.
- special class treats – e.g. golden time, homework pass, extra playtime.
- delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- a mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

While we promote and reward positive behaviour, misdemeanours need to be recognised and dealt with and sanctions will be administered. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.

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.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the Code of Behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

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The use of sanctions or consequences will be characterised by certain features:

- It will be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It will be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and serious/gross offences
- It will be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus
- The sanction will be age appropriate and proportionate to the offence

The following steps may be used **individually or collectively** to show consequences of unacceptable behaviour:

1. Reasoning with pupil.
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class for a cooling off period.
4. Prescribing extra work
5. Loss of privileges- Golden Time or other discretionary curricular time relevant to each class
6. Teacher time during breaks
7. Referral to principal
8. Communication with parents by class teacher
9. Principal communicates with parents.
10. Suspension
11. Expulsion

This list may not always be followed in the order outlined above. The sanction or sanctions used will always be considered in light of any specific misbehaviour.

Teachers are encouraged to keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

Any usage of the internet, digital media or mobile phone which intrudes on the privacy and dignity of the staff, students or their families is deemed a serious breach of the Code of Discipline. Any behaviour which endangers the health and safety of any member of the school community, including the inappropriate use of social media, is treated with the utmost seriousness by the Principal and Board of Management.

Bullying

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is repeated deliberate aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

All reports of bullying in school will be investigated and dealt with immediately and the unacceptable behaviour dealt with promptly and discreetly. The parents/guardians of any child involved in a serious incident will be informed.

Bullying or any form of intimidation in school is forbidden.

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Procedures for raising a concern or bringing a complaint about a behaviour matter

If a parent has a concern he/she should:

1. write a note to the teacher/phone the teacher
2. arrange an appointment to meet with the teacher to discuss the issue
3. arrange an appointment to meet with the principal (following step 2) if necessary.

If a teacher has a concern he/she can:

- inform the principal
- write a note to the parent outlining behaviour
- speak with the parent in a phone call or in a meeting

Policies and procedures for suspension or expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised.

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 the child’s case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupils 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 with the Chairperson and the Principal. 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. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviour, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes as well as 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, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board 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.

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.

Right of Appeal:

If a child has been suspended for a total of twenty days in a school year parent may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Likewise in the case of expulsion parents/ guardians may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education. An appeal against expulsion may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement):

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated. An undertaking must be given that the 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.

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Record Keeping

All records will be written in a factual, impartial manner.

Class teacher will keep records of serious misbehaviour in the class.

Incidents of misbehaviour **which are on-going in nature or serious** will be recorded on the school database system ‘Aladdin’.

The record notes the following information:

1. Date and location
2. Incident of misbehaviour
3. Pupils involved
4. Name of supervising teacher
5. Actions taken

All meetings with parents will be dated and recorded in Aladdin.

All records will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child’s life (in the past or present), which may affect the child’s behaviour.

The following methods of communication in relation to behaviour are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher
- Through children’s homework journal
- Letters/notes, texts and emails from school to home and from home to school

Procedure for notification of a pupil’s absence from school

The school attendance policy outlines strategies for promoting attendance at school and give guidelines to parents regarding absences.

Parents/Guardians are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child by

- Notifying the school (e.g. phone call to secretary/principal or through Aladdin Connect) of the cause of the absence not later than the end of the third day of absence
- Sending in a signed dated explanation of absence when the pupil returns to school in the Homework Journal.
- Pupil absences are reported as requested to the Tusla.

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Reference to other policies:

Our school plan is a holistic plan aimed at providing a positive teaching and learning environment for staff and pupils. Therefore many elements of various curriculum and organisational policies overlap and complement one another. Those that link directly to this Code of Behaviour are:

- Supervision Policy
- SPHE plan
- Anti Bullying
- Enrolment
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- Substance Use

Success Criteria:

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

Implementation/ Ratification and Review:

This code was updated in March 2017 and will be reviewed at agreed intervals.

Reviewed : _____

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)

_____ (Principal)

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