



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

Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

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

The Role of School Staff & adults in our school community

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

Adults should:

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- provide a caring and effective learning environment
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all

All staff, including temporary and substitute teachers, will be provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour. Staff will be responsible for ensuring that the day to day implementation of school policies and practices support the objectives outlined in this code of behaviour.

Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour. In catering for children who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their special educational needs, the strategies used to cater for these children are very child specific and are developed in consultation

with Learning Support/Resource Teacher(s), Class Teacher, Principal and Parents. Behavioural targets are outlined in individual IEPs.

Teachers and the Curriculum

Teachers will use the Social, Personal and Health Education programme to support the Code of Behaviour. Through the SPHE programme teachers will aim to foster self-esteem and help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship. They will also aim to help our pupils develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, as well as conflict resolution skills.

The Role of the Board of Management

The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school and has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is prepared, implemented and reviewed regularly. The Board will offer support and advice on any interventions deemed necessary. It will support staff in providing opportunities for staff development and has a particular role in the area of suspension and expulsion.

The Role of Parents

Parents play a key role in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The school needs the support and co-operation of parents in order to meet legitimate behavioural expectations. They play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes that produce good behaviour in school. To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood, parents are kept informed through the pupil's diary, availability of policies through the school website and an ethos of open communication through parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, text-a-parent service etc,

Parents should:

- ensure children attend school regularly and punctually – school opens at 9.20am
- provide the school with requisite notes for absences, appointments etc.
- be aware of and co-operating with the school's rules and systems of reward and sanction
- encourage the children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- attend meetings at the school if requested
- help children with their homework, sign the homework diary ensuring that it is completed
- ensure that children have the necessary books and materials for school
- work with the school to promote positive behaviour as is outlined in this policy

Parents will be alerted at an early stage where there are concerns about their child's behaviour, so that ways of helping the pupil can be discussed and agreed. Where parents wish to express their concerns regarding matters of behaviour they will raise the concerns firstly with the class teacher, then with the principal and if the issues remain unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further he/she may put his/her concerns in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Prior to registering a pupil, the parents shall be provided with a copy of the schools' Code of Behaviour. Parents will be asked, as a condition of registering a child, to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their child. (Section 23 (4) of Education Welfare Act 2000)

The Role of Pupils

In as far as possible, pupils are consulted about school, yard and class rules. The reasons for specific rules are always discussed with pupils to give them a better understanding of the need for them. We believe that pupils are more likely to support a Code of Behaviour where they understand the context. The class rules will be regularly reviewed with them.

Pupils should:

- Show respect for themselves, for others, for their own property & that of others and for the environment.
- Show kindness and a willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners
- Show fairness and forgiveness
- Work to the best of their ability at school and for homework
- Respect the school rules and procedures
- Help create a safe and positive environment
- Attend school regularly and punctually

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by the teachers. Through effective communication between school and home we will ensure that discipline is consistent and fair. It must always be kept in mind that it is bad behaviour which is rejected and not the child.

The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results. Where possible the approach to discipline should be of a positive nature. Praise should be used rather than criticism. Incentives should be used to obtain better behaviour and a high standard of homework and participation in lessons.

General school strategies

Attendance

- The school will be open to receive pupils at 9.20am
- 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 pupils 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.
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Uniform.

(see School Uniform Policy for details)

- The school uniform is to be worn for school activities from 1st class to 6th class. The school tracksuit is normally worn for P.E. day by these classes, while Junior and Senior Infants wear it at all times.
- Pupils should have all their belongings name-tagged. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage to pupil possessions.

Lunches

- All pupils are encouraged to eat a healthy lunch. (see Healthy Lunch Policy)
- Friday is treat day when a small treat is allowed.
- In keeping with our Green Schools policy, children are asked to bring home all packaging and leftovers.
- Parental support is required to implement this rule.
- Designated times are allocated for the eating of lunches.

In the classroom

- Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of the school year to provide for the smooth, internal running of that class. These rules will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for one another.
- Pupils will have an input each year in devising the class rules (this is usually done through SPHE – circle time/discussion etc)
- Teachers employ a variety of classroom management techniques which will ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- There is a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour. A differentiated approach to curriculum is important to ensure that all pupils are involved and challenged
- Timetabling will aim to ensure variety and balance
- Discrete and integrated lessons on positive behaviour
- Exploring with pupils how to treat others as they would like to be treated
- Using a variety of reward systems e.g. Class Dojo where points are accumulated electronically, either individually or collectively in order to earn rewards, star charts, student of the week etc., both group and individual rewards

Playground

- There are a concise set of playground rules which promote positive behaviour. These rules are discussed at a staff meeting at beginning of year staff meeting and at intervals during the school year.
- Rules are discussed with pupils to ensure they understand the context
- There are at least three teachers on supervision at each break. The SNA is deployed as designated by Principal depending on need. Guidelines are issued to teachers at the start of each school year to ensure adequate supervision across the school.
- For reasons of safety, pupils are expected to stay in the appropriate yard at breaks and line up in the designated area when the bell rings. Pupils walk promptly to the line when the bell rings. A weekly points system is in place to incentivise the children when lining up, with appropriate rewards being given by the class teachers when targets are reached.
- Misbehaviour in the yard or field will normally be punished by the pupil being detained in a particular spot. Repeated misbehaviour will be punished by detention. Pupils are expected to respect and obey those adults who are supervising the yard.
- No playing is allowed on the grassy areas during the winter season.
- No climbing in windows, on walls or fences, no playing under the trees in the field or in the woodland is allowed.
- Games which involve physical contact that could cause injury or hurt to others are not acceptable and both teachers and SNA supervise in a proactive way to intervene if they see such play developing.
- Playing hurling or camogie without helmets is not allowed
- Cycling in the school yard is prohibited.
- In order to monitor the movement of pupils they must ask permission from supervising teacher to go indoors to use bathroom or get something
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the school grounds during break times or on other occasions without permission. Breaches of this rule may lead to suspension..
- On wet days pupils remain in their classroom and are provided with games to play or films to watch in an organised manner.
- A behaviour incident file is maintained by the school. Teachers on supervision record more serious misdemeanours.

In the school environment

- Good school routines are in place e.g. entering and leaving the classroom/building, appropriate seating arrangements, transition time routines etc. These are necessary to provide a positive school environment conducive to good teaching and learning.
- Children are not to interfere with the school's, teachers' or other pupils' property.
- Mobile phones: children who need to have a mobile phone for contact should hand it up to the class teacher during school hours. If a parent needs to contact a child they can phone the secretary in the office.

- Sanctions for misuse of mobile phones and other electronic gadgets are outlined in the school's Mobile Phone policy.
- Smoking, alcohol and the taking of illegal substances is banned from Gowran N.S. and its environs.
- In the interest of safety, no dangerous objects/ sharp implements are allowed in pupils' possession e.g. knives, catapult etc. Such items may be confiscated by the Principal for collection by the parents.
- Jewellery that is a danger to the child or others is forbidden.

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

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 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.

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 will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. Following consultation with the principal, teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. **The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this:**

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
6. Detention during breaks
7. Referral to principal
8. Communication with parents by class teacher
9. Principal communicates with parents. :

- If the unacceptable behaviour continues, the principal and class teacher will meet with parents / guardians and follow the procedure below.

- i. Have their parents/guardians informed (by phone call or letter). Parents will be called in to the school.
- ii. Be placed on a daily or weekly report, to be signed by both parent and teacher and checked regularly by the principal.
- iii. If necessary, have a contract agreed which includes the staged accrual of privileges. The contract should be written in such a way that it is focused on specific behavioural problems and offers accrued benefits for achieving the stated goals- in this way a balance can be seen to be kept between sanctions and rewards.

- iv .Be suspended from school (if they do not stop offending) for a minor fixed period (one or two days).
- vi Parents/guardians must agree to try to help the child to overcome the unacceptable behaviour.
- vii Outside agencies may be called in at this point to help, e.g. Social Workers, School Psychologist etc.

10. Exclusion

In the very rare event that a child is continuously disruptive it may be more appropriate to remove the child temporarily from the school – i.e. suspension.
Please see section below on Suspension and Expulsion.

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.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

Suspension / Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, 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.

Covid -19

The objective of our Code of Behaviour is to ensure a safe and happy working environment for the children and staff of Gowran National School. To ensure the safety of the entire school community during this particular time, any breaches of discipline related to the Covid-19 Response Plan will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with, using the sanctions mentioned previously. The school will be obliged to send a child home if he/she engages in serious misbehaviour, such as spitting or deliberately coughing at others. Such conduct threatens the health and safety of the entire school community.

Record Keeping

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

Class teacher will keep records of misbehaviour in the class.

The staff will maintain a yard incident record where yard misbehaviours are noted as deemed necessary in the professional judgement of the supervising teacher.. If a yard misbehaviour is recorded the class teacher will also be notified.

All meetings with parents will be dated and recorded and filed in the principal's office.

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) 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.

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:

- 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)

