

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Aims of Primary Education

General

1. To enable children to live full lives as children.
2. To equip them to avail themselves of further education.
3. To prepare them to live full and useful lives as adults in society.

Specific

- To help children to think clearly, creatively and critically and to act independently.
- To help in fostering the desire to learn, in encouraging children to a sense of self-esteem and in cultivating in them the motivation to apply themselves to worthwhile and satisfying activities.
- To help children to develop their creative and imaginative capacities, through both expressive and appreciative activities.
- To help children to acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities and the desire to use them.
- To help children to develop physically.
- To help children to understand the society and environment in which they live, the interdependence of people and nations, and to foster a spirit of co-operation and the capacity and willingness to contribute in a critical but positive manner towards the development of society.
- To help children to respect, appreciate and understand their own and other cultural identities.
- To help children to acquire and develop moral and religious values and a respect for the beliefs and values held by others.
- To help children to prepare for the social, domestic, recreational and working aspects of their adult lives.

Aims of the Code

In order to achieve the aims of primary education as outlined above it is necessary that the school should be a well ordered and disciplined place. A school code of discipline has been drawn up to ensure its smooth running and to provide an environment where the child is happy and secure. The code is also a framework for providing good relationships and close co-operation between students, teachers, parents/guardians and Board of Management.

The code should help create a friendly, happy atmosphere leading to

- Self motivation.
- Independence and initiative.
- Toleration of and respect for others and their property.
- Self-esteem.
- Good listening, learning and working habits.
- Rational appraisal of what is right and wrong.
- A spirit of co-operation at work and play.
- Creation of a positive learning environment

Principles of the Code

1. The school code promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour.
2. The code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions and the ideal is that children will acquire the skills of self - discipline.
3. Sanctions are imposed to maintain good order and to discourage offenders.

4. In imposing a sanction it is the misbehaviour which is unacceptable and not the individual
5. School recognises the variety of differences between children and the need to accommodate same.
6. Parents should accept responsibility for the behaviour of their children.
7. School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

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.

Where a child with special needs is acting in a way that is in breach of the rules, school staff will help the child to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why his/her behaviour is unacceptable. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

Behaviour in Class

1. Courtesy and respect for others is the basis for good classroom behaviour in which children can learn in a secure safe atmosphere.
2. Pupils will co-operate with instructions given by the teacher.
3. Pupils will complete assigned work both at school and at home. The work may be written / oral.
4. Pupils will bring to school each day all books, copies and materials necessary to do their work properly.
5. Pupils will leave and return to classrooms in an orderly fashion.
6. Pupils are expected to wear the correct uniform each day.
7. Pupils will respect and care for classroom property and help to keep their classrooms litter free.

Behaviour in the Playground and School Environment

1. For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils will move about the school in an orderly fashion.
2. Children must not behave in any way which endangers themselves or others.
3. Any behaviour which interferes with other children at play is not permitted and teachers may be told, so that the matter can be dealt with effectively. These incidents may be recorded in the class teacher's notes and/or Yard Incident Book.
4. Children must remain within the playground boundaries during breaks.
5. Permission must be sought to re-enter school buildings from supervising teachers.
6. Children should keep playgrounds litter free.
7. Children will respect all school property, the gardens and staff cars.
8. Children should line up in an orderly manner at the end of the breaks.
9. Pupils must accept the authority of all teachers in the school.
10. Pupils must have due respect for all Special Needs Assistants and all other employees of the school
11. All cyclists and those with scooters and flickers must dismount when entering the school grounds and all children must walk their bikes, scooters or flickers until they exit the school gates in the evening after school.
12. A child involved in any accident or hurt in any way should report or be reported to the teacher on yard supervision or to any other available staff member. The staff member may decide to attend to the injuries or send the child to the school First Aid area to be attended to by a member of staff. When deemed necessary, parents will be informed or asked to bring the child home where the injury or illness merits ongoing concern. When deemed necessary, the services of a doctor or ambulance may be sought for the child.

Examples of Minor Misdemeanours

- Interrupting
- Ignoring teacher's instructions
- Talking in class when specifically asked not to do so
- Distracting or constant talking to other students
- Arriving late for school
- Running in school building
- Talking in class line
- Leaving seat without permission at lunch time
- Placing food or drinks waste in the class bin
- Leaving litter around the school
- Being discourteous/unmannerly
- Not carrying out or not completing assigned work either in school or for homework without good reason
- Not having homework signed by a parent
- Games considered dangerous to the child himself/herself or others
- Endangering self or fellow students in the school or on school property

Examples of Serious Misdemeanours

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Damaging or interfering with another person's property
- Bullying or intimidation, including by phone, text or internet on school property (See Anti-Bullying policy)
- Back answering a staff member
- Leaving school premises during the day without permission
- Using or writing unacceptable language
- Having glass bottles, jars of correction fluids or other solvents in school
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil or partaking in any activity which would put himself/herself or others in danger
- Misuse of fire equipment
- Being in possession of a mobile phone on school property (See Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices)

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

- Deliberately vandalising school property
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, pushing, spitting or biting, towards a staff member or pupil
- Bringing drugs, cigarettes, matches or lighters to school
- Damaging vehicles parked on school grounds
- Setting off the fire alarm
- Persistent infringement of school rules.

School Rules

If the school is to function efficiently it is necessary that the rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced.

Respect and Courtesy

All pupils are expected to treat staff, fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times.

School Uniform

- i. Girls Formal Uniform: Grey skirt/pinafore, cream blouse, maroon cardigan with crest, maroon tie, grey or maroon socks, shoes (preferably Velcro).
- ii. Boys Formal Uniform: Grey trousers, grey shirt, maroon jumper with crest, Maroon tie, grey socks, shoes (preferably Velcro)
- iii. Boys and Girls School Tracksuit: Maroon Tracksuit with Crest, Grey Airtex Shirt, Runners (Velcro)
- iv. School jacket with crest is optional

All items should be labelled clearly with child's name

All children are required to wear the formal school uniform. On the day when P.E. is timetabled for the class, the children are required to wear the school tracksuit. If the school uniform cannot be worn on a particular day parents should inform the class teacher.

Attendance

- i. The official opening time is 9.20 a.m. Class for all pupils ends at 3.00 p.m. Children who are late for school and miss their line in the mornings must enter the school through Reception. The names of children who are late will be recorded and this will be included in the pupil's report. Punctuality in the mornings is of great importance.
- ii. No responsibility is accepted for the pupils outside of these times.
- iii. Pupils should not be on the school grounds / property when school is not in operation.

Absence

- i. Every absence of a child must be accounted for by forwarding a note to the class teacher.
- ii. If a child wishes to leave school early a written note should be given to the class teacher and parents/guardians must collect child at reception and sign the child out at reception.

Medical

- i. The class teacher should be informed if your child has a medical complaint which may affect him/her in school.
- ii. Any infectious illness should be notified to the school immediately.
- iii. If parent(s)/guardians are absent from home, arrangements should be made for someone to look after child in the event of him/her being sent home unexpectedly due to illness or accident.
- iv. Pupils may be referred, with parents/guardians consent, for medical psychological or educational assessment.
- v. The main contact numbers for parents/guardian must be active and updated when necessary by parents/guardians.

Health and Safety

- i. Children should be clean and neat.
- ii. Attention should be paid especially to care of hair.
- iii. Long hair must be tied back.
- iv. Children should have a nutritious lunch each day.
- v. Chewing gum, crisps, sugary foods, chocolate and fizzy drinks are not allowed.
- vi. Smoking is prohibited on school premises or grounds.

- vii. Pupils may wear stud earrings only.
- viii. Make-up is not allowed
- ix. Motorists are not permitted to drive their cars up to the school building
- x. Motorists are requested to obey the signs in the carpark
- xi. Cars should not be parked near school gates, near the barrier, in bus bay or in set down area.
- xii. For P.E. shorts, top and runners or tracksuit and runners must be worn.
- xiii. Children who are unable to take part due to sickness or injury should have a note from parents/guardians
- xiv. No jewellery to be worn during P.E. lessons or during team games
- xv. Mobile phones are not allowed. Please see the school's policy on the use of mobile phones and electronic devices.

Personal and School Property

- i. Pupils must have their names on all personal property such as school books, copies, coats, musical instruments etc.
- ii. Pupils must respect all school property
- iii. Pupils must keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- iv. Pupils must cooperate fully in any organised clean up activities.

Homework

- i. It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. Teachers will make every effort to match the curriculum to the aptitude of the pupil.
- ii. Parents should check and sign homework notebook each night.
- iii. Parents can help with homework by:
 - Providing suitable working conditions at home
 - Helping their child organise his/her time to best advantage so that things are not left to the last minute or even forgotten
 - Taking a positive and active interest in their child's work at home rather than just insisting that it is done
 - Letting the class teacher know if there are any problems with homework that cannot be resolved at home
 - Reading should be encouraged every night. Reading is a life skill and thus should not just be confined to the allocated time.
 - Use of interactive resources at www.interactiveresources.co.uk

How much time for homework?

The following are general guidelines for time spent at homework. Children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year.

The following are general guidelines only:

Rang 3	30-40	minutes
Rang 4	40-45	minutes
Rang 5	45-60	minutes
Rang 6	-60	minutes

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends. Reading should be encouraged every night.

Rewards for Good Behaviour

Teachers may adopt different rewards from the following list of possible strategies - oral and written.

1. Praise from the teacher and the Principal.
2. Behaviour record chart in classroom - winning group/team is relieved of some homework.
3. A pupil of the week/year award.
4. Small prizes, merit lists, merit stars to be presented at Assembly or in class.
5. Pupil of the Month, Gaeilgeoir na Míosa, Mathematician of the Month, Class of the Month
6. Night off homework.
7. Extra school privileges or responsibilities.
8. Standardised note of praise/small reward.
9. Certificate of good behaviour.

Sanctions

Sanctions are necessary to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. They contain a degree of flexibility to take account of individual circumstances.

Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, international Conventions and case law.

Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- **The right to be heard**
- **The right to impartiality**

The **right to be heard** means:

- The right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
- The right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account
- The right to know how the issue will be decided
- The right to respond to the allegations
- Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body
- Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts.

The **right to impartiality** means:

- The right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker
- The right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making.

An impartial process is one that allows a decision to be made based on an unbiased evaluation of information and evidence. Generally, impartiality requires that the investigation is separated from the process of making a decision so that the decision-maker comes to the task with an open mind.

Procedures

When misbehaviour occurs the following is a list of possible sanctions or strategies used and the procedures to be adopted for solving same.

1. The pupil is made aware that his/her behaviour is unacceptable.
2. The pupil receives verbal reprimand from teacher and is advised on how to improve.
3. The pupil may be temporarily separated from peers, friends and others (e.g. class group, from the yard etc.). The parents/guardians may be informed where necessary.
4. For misbehaviour on yard, the pupil's name may be entered in the class teacher's records and/or the yard incident book. The parents/guardians may be informed where necessary.
5. Additional homework or a written assignment re his/her inappropriate behaviour may be prescribed.
6. Badly presented or incomplete homework may have to be re-done.
7. A note or comment on misbehaviour may be written in the pupil's homework notebook to be signed by parents/guardians.
8. If a pupil continues to misbehave – the parents/guardians will be asked to meet with class teacher.
9. A classroom support plan may be deemed necessary. This will require the full support of the parents/guardians in its implementation.
10. If the misbehaviour continues the pupil will be referred to the Principal.
11. If the problem persists the parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the Principal. The child may be deprived of privileges. The parents/guardians will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour at this meeting. If the problem continues on-going discussions may be required and the parents/guardians will be advised that more serious sanctions will apply.
12. In instances of repeated serious misbehaviour, the parents/guardians will be requested to meet with the Principal and will be asked to give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future. The parents/guardians will also be advised of the formal sanctions that may apply if the behaviour continues.
13. If the serious misbehaviour continues, the Principal will contact the parents/guardians in writing to request a formal meeting regarding their child's behaviour. At this meeting the parents will be fully informed about any allegations and the processes that were used to investigate the incidents. The parents/guardians will also have the right to respond to any allegations before a decision is made and before any sanctions are imposed. If after 3 days the parents/guardians have not responded to the formal request for a meeting the Principal will send a second letter by registered post. If the parents decide not to engage with the school after the second letter, the Principal will forward the detail of all allegations by registered post and proceed to 14.
14. If, after this process, the Board of Management delegates the Principal with the authority to suspend, the maximum suspension will be for 3 days. The parents/guardians will be given notice by registered post that their child is being suspended. However, there will be adequate time between the notice of suspension and the start of the suspension for the parents/guardians to make a formal appeal in writing to the Board of Management (minimum of 5 school days). The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:
 - a) The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of the other students
 - b) The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
 - c) The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

- d) A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension
15. If after an initial suspension the child's behaviour has not improved Steps 12, 13 and 14 above apply again but a second suspension if imposed will be up to a maximum of 10 school days.
16. Upon the implementation of a suspension the Principal will notify the parents/guardians in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will 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 dates for suspension will be such that the parents/guardians will have adequate time to appeal the decision and be heard before the suspension is imposed
 - The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills, Education Act 1998, section 29 – where a pupil has been suspended in the current school year for 20 days or more
17. When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a pupil should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and the sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school should expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.
18. In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board of Management having informed the parents guardians, may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension
19. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case.

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal should:

- Inform the pupil and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Give parents and the pupil every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Parents and the pupil must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the pupil and their parents is essential. It provides the 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. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

If a pupil and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should 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 inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should:

- Inform the parents and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the pupil; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the pupil).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a pupil, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the pupil. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24 (1)). The Board of Management should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The pupil cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24 (1)).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty

days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, s4A*).

The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a pupil should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the pupil, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24*).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the pupil to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities.

In the interests of the educational welfare of the pupil, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the pupil's future education.

Pending these consultations about the pupil's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of pupils is secured (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 (5)*). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a pupil during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the pupil during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the pupil should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the pupil should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the pupil.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*Education Act 1998 section 29*). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil.

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 Skills). 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 should 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.

Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis.