

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR



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CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTION

St. Michael's House Special National School Baldoyle (SMH SNS) is designated by the Department of Education and Skills as a school for students with a Severe to Profound general learning disability.

This Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the school community to ensure that school policy is compliant with legal requirements and good practice as set out in the "Developing Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools" (NEWB 2008), Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011), DES Circular 0061/2006 and St. Michael's House Positive Behaviour Support Policy. It has been developed in conjunction with the 'Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations' guidelines for schools which were circulated to schools in December 2024.

The intellectual ability, stage of development and understanding of the student will be borne in mind at all times in relation to their behaviour in school.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

Our school aims to foster self-esteem, confidence and a positive image, thus enabling our students to become valued and valuable members of their communities. We believe that students must be guided towards positive, responsible self-behaviour if they are to achieve their potential in all aspects of their development. We expect the highest standard of behaviour possible in this school and we will strive to engender good behaviour in a caring, nurturing and positive environment.

The school actively encourages students to become involved in processes to avoid conflict and to find solutions to conflict. Promoting a sense of equality and fair play is essential when developing strategies for resolving conflict.

Our Code of Behaviour will be most effective where there is respect, openness and co-operation between staff, parents, guardians and pupils. We will maintain a close working relationship with all partners to ensure that the Code is understood by all and thereby works for the personal and social development of every student.

AIMS OF THE CODE

The aims of the code of behaviour are:

- To provide a safe and secure learning environment for all our students
- To ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each student to an education in a safe and disruptive-free environment
- To respect and safeguard the dignity and the particular needs of individual students
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where students can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To promote positive behaviour while noting the difference between students and the need to accommodate these differences

- To ensure that students behave in a respectful manner towards each other, school staff and the wider community
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, consequences and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school taking into account the functional abilities of the students.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others
- To teach, foster and encourage socially acceptable behaviour within the school and the community at large
- To assist parents and students 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

CORE VALUES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

In order to support students who present with behaviours of concern, as a school we must underpin a number of core values:

- Clear student focus – All decisions concerning a student should prioritize the student's best interests and ensure their dignity is upheld.
- Wellbeing – School policies, procedures and practices must promote and support the wellbeing of all individuals.
- Respect – Students, parents/guardians and school staff have a right to and deserve to be treated with respect, care and dignity.
- Collaboration – Parents/guardians are valued as key members and have their voice listened to.
- Whole-school Leadership – Whole school approaches should continue to build on existing approaches that are dedicated to teaching, nurturing and encouraging positive social behaviours.
- Safe Environment – A key priority within the school should be minimising the risk of harm to students and staff. Creating and enabling an environment where students feel effectively supported.
- Legal Obligations – Schools must be cognisant of their legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of students and staff.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

It is the responsibility of school management and staff along with students and their parents to work together to create a positive school climate that will support and promote good behaviour. In achieving this objective each partner has their own role and responsibilities. School leaders play a unique role in supporting this endeavour.

- **Board of Management (BOM)**

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the preparation and review of the Code of Behaviour and the fair and consistent implementation of the Code of Behaviour. All serious matters regarding behaviour must be reported to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management of a school has overall responsibility for the development, implementation and review of a number interrelated school policies and practices.

The Board also has a duty of care to all staff to ensure that their work environment is safe, risks are identified and guidance/training are offered. These risks may include behaviours of concern which may undermine the safety of the student and staff.

- **Principal**

The Principal has final responsibility for the day-to day running of the school. He/she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate. Any concerns with regard to behavioural issues must be reported to the Principal.

- **Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal supports the Principal in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. In the absence of the Principal he/she acts for the Principal.

- **School Staff – Teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)**

All teachers are responsible for discipline within his/her classroom as well as the orderly assembly and dismissal of his/her class at break time and at the end of the day. Students are never left unsupervised in St. Michael's House Special National School, Baldoyle between 09:05 a.m. and 02:45p.m. Teachers make pupils aware of the school rules at the beginning of each school year. Teachers of older classes guide pupils towards the agreement of class rules at the beginning of the school year. Any sanctions for minor behaviour are dealt with by the class teacher. Teachers are also responsible for reporting concerns regarding students' behaviour to the Principal as they occur.

SNAs liaise with and support the teacher at all times in the maintenance of discipline and creating a calm working environment in the classroom. They assist pupils in their care needs to enable them to work successfully to the best of their ability. All new members of staff are made aware of the Code of Behaviour when they come to the school. Matters relating to the Code of Behaviour can be discussed at all staff meetings, but especially at the first staff meeting of the year.

Significant incident procedures are on display in every classroom and every staff member has signed them at the beginning of the school year.

- **SMH Nursing Staff**

The school nurses provide nursing care support for our students and are also an integral part of the school-wide approach to positive behaviour support.

- **Multi-Disciplinary Team**

The Multi-Disciplinary Team (**MDT**) is a term used to describe the clinical team that support our students in this school. It is made up of qualified clinicians/social workers who also use positive behaviour management strategies in their work on behalf of students. With the agreement of parents/guardians, members of the MDT can be requested to support a student, school and/or family through the development of Positive Behaviour Support Plans. These Positive behaviour Support plans outline individual strategies for students who are experiencing particular difficulties.

Parents

On enrolment of their child, a copy of the Code of Behaviour will be given to parents. Parents are requested to support the school staff in keeping the rules of the school. Parents are actively involved in their child's wellbeing and can help promote this within the school community by:

1. Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually;
2. Encouraging and helping their child to co-operate with the school's rules;
3. Helping their child with homework, where applicable and supporting the child to achieve their Individual Education Plan goals;
4. Attending meetings in school as requested.

Our school team always welcome the opportunity to discuss with parents, any behavioural problem that may arise from time to time. With mutual respect, trust and goodwill these occasional problems are readily solved.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage behaviour that might challenge is to try to prevent it happening in the first place. All members of the school community are expected to behave in ways that show respect for others. Behaviour will reflect our school values of respect, kindness, courtesy, fairness, forgiveness, respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict. Standards are also a way of signalling the kinds of behaviours that are not acceptable in the school e.g. behaviour that is hurtful, demeaning, behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning or is threatening and/or causes physical hurt to other pupils and/or staff.

Promoting high standards of behaviour is the central aim of this code of behaviour. Teachers, staff and the wider school community employ a range of strategies for promoting good behaviour at class and at school level. Students are more likely to behave well when they understand why the code is important and their part in making it work. They need to see that the code works in a fair manner. A code of behaviour works well where there are good relationships between teachers, SNAs, students, parents and the wider school community.

Co-operation and communication with parents/guardians/respite carers is seen as an important factor in encouraging positive behaviour. The following models of communication are used at all levels within the school:

- IEP process/ Next Steps assessments
- Informal and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through the school's Aladdin account, the student's individual See Saw account or if requested through home.
- Letters and notes to and from school to home/respite
- Meetings held in school
- End of year reports
- Phone calls to and from home/respite
- Newsletters
- Instagram

THE PLAN TO PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Positive behaviour will most likely occur when the student's needs are being met. The goal should be to create environments which meet a student's needs.

A whole school approach will help to create, maintain and foster a positive school climate that will support and promote good behaviour. We aim to achieve this by:

- Creating a sense of fairness and consistency, taking into account the competence, understanding and functional abilities of the students. These are crucial in deciding on the appropriate responses to behaviours.
- Creating a positive and encouraging attitude to students at all times
- Creating a calm, well organised and caring environment
- Promoting self-esteem amongst the students at all times
- Making rules positive, "do's" rather than "don'ts" in a language that is appropriate for the student's ability
- Developing and supporting positive, respectful relationships between students and staff
- Using class and school settings to promote and encourage positive behaviour e.g. Monthly Change-maker assemblies, Wellbeing Wednesdays, specific lessons & Whole school events.
- Using positive language appropriate to the student's level of understanding that is affirmative, respectful and fair.
- Good school and classroom routines with clear guidelines and boundaries for students
- Ethical Human Values Curriculum.

We have adopted a problem-solving framework where we consider what maybe the student is trying to communicate through their behaviour and create targeted interventions to support the students in these moments. We use visuals, adapt the environment, revise profiles, look at the setting conditions of the day and use individual support plans.

ENCOURAGING AND PROMOTING GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Good behaviour is encouraged and promoted in the school by the factors listed below. All of these strategies will be implemented in the classroom, on the school bus, in the playground and on school related activities within the community.

- Modelling positive everyday interactions between teachers, SNAs and students
- Good school and classroom routines with clear boundaries for students
- Involving students in the preparation of school and classroom rules
- Developing student's communication skills as the ability to communicate effectively has a significant impact on behaviour
- Developing student's social skills through the teaching of the SPHE programme and the Human Values programme and throughout the school day .
- Good communication with parents and in particular, parents informing the school where situations arise at home that might influence behaviour in school
- Recognising and affirming good behaviour
- Fostering respect for themselves and others
- Encouraging students to participate to the best of their ability
- Encouraging good attendance at school
- Celebrating all milestones for our students

School Rules

The school rules are kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what the students should do:

- Be a good friend
- Good listening- follow instructions from staff
- Good waiting
- Nice hands- be gentle
- Nice voice- Use kind, helpful words when talking to people in school
- Show respect for yourself, other students and staff and for the school environment

Class Rules

Each teacher will develop class rules with the students, reflecting the school rules, in a language and manner appropriate to the age and stage of development of the students, embracing the concept of fairness, to reflect Restorative Practices. Class rules are displayed in the classroom and referred to regularly. Award systems are used to encourage good behaviour. We recognise that students in our school may need to be taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour in more tangible ways, e.g. through the use of pictures, charts, film, social stories or role play. We also recognise that students use a variety of approaches to internalise and learn new skills. Students will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by the adults in the school. Praise is earned by maintenance of good standards of behaviour as well as by particular noteworthy personal achievement. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for academic work.

Activities to encourage Positive Behaviours

- Circle time in the classroom
- Explaining positive behaviour regularly and revising class/school/playground rules
- Role play and social stories
- Encouraging participation in games and fun activities together
- Assembly
- Providing individualised supports to enable students to communicate and to participate in the school community
- Explicit teaching of 'The Five Universal Human Values' programme in each class

Incentives / Praise / Positive Strategies

The following are some examples of how incentives / praise may be given to students

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in the student's digital home/school journal
- Choice of favourite activity
- A trip / outing within the local community
- A visit to another staff member / school principal/deputy principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of the class group by a staff member / principal at assembly

- A reward system of stars, stickers, appropriate to the age and maturity level of the child
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege to the student
- A photo sent to the parent / guardian on Seesaw
- Receipt of Change-maker certificate

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in school helps a student to make and maintain friendships and be fully included in the life of the school. Parents are required to notify the school and bus escort if a student is absent and inform the class teacher on Seesaw.

The procedures to be followed by parents in relation to a student's absence are:

- Parent must let the school know of their child's absence and reason for this absence
- Parents must inform the school of all students absences in writing through See Saw or in a communication copy
- Parents may inform the school in advance of a planned absence
- Parents need to give detailed information to the school about the reasons for absence following a period of absence
- Failure to notify the school about a student's absence may be followed up by a phone call is deemed necessary.

The school co-operates fully with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act in reporting student's attendance and absences from school.

IMPLEMENTING THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Responding to inappropriate behaviour in school

Incidents of misbehaviour are classed as minor, serious and gross. Minor incidents are generally dealt with by the class team. Serious breaches of school rules will be notified to the school principal. Gross breaches of behaviour may lead to the suspension or expulsion of the student and will only be applied in accordance with the procedures set out below.

Due to the nature of our student cohort, all of whom have a severe to profound intellectual disability, behaviours that may appear as "misbehaviour" are often understood as expressions of communication, sensory regulation or emotional distress. As such incidents are not typically viewed as intentional misconduct and responses focus on understanding the underlying needs and supporting the student appropriately.

Sanctions

The purpose of less serious sanctions is to bring about a change of behaviour by

- Helping students to learn that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- Helping students, in ways appropriate to their understanding, to know that they have choices about their own behaviour and that choices have consequences
- Helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

Sanctions will be proportionate to the behaviour and will take into account the level of understanding of the student. Where a sanction is unlikely to result in the change of behaviour, this will obviously be a factor to be taken into account. Some measures, such as suspension or expulsion may be invoked to ensure the safety of, or vindicate the rights of, other members of the school community. Situations which may require such measures as described below in the relevant section.

Reminder of school rules

- Redirection to another activity
- Reasoning with the student based on communication and their level of understanding
- Verbal reprimand based on communication and level of understanding of the student
- Temporary separation from peers; student may be supported in moving to a safe zone with staff e.g. the garden or sensory corner for a specified period of time to allow them to self-regulate
- Change position in classroom
- Time in a quiet 1:1 workstation with staff to allow the student to regulate their behaviour
- Communication with parents/guardians to advise of behaviour and seek support from the MMT.

Serious Misbehaviour

From time to time, parents and staff can find some behaviour difficult and stressful to address. There are times when a student presents with behaviours that cause concern for their well-being and sometimes their safety and/or the safety of others. Serious misbehaviour include behaviours that are hurtful or offensive including bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation, spitting and physically challenging behaviour towards others. Any staff member who deals with an incident of inappropriate behaviour must report to the principal/deputy principal immediately and follow our significant incident procedures. An account of these incidents will be recorded on the schools incident reports and these will be handed into the office the same day. Parents should be informed of serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour or significant incidents on the day and a note made of the call on Aladdin.

When the behaviour plan in place is not effective, behaviours are analysed using the antecedent-behaviour-consequences (ABC) checklist which examines:

- Possible causes / reasons for behaviours
- The nature and frequency of the behaviour
- What happens as a result of the behaviour

This type of assessment enables staff to make adjustments to the environment, to the programme or teaching strategies. Data on behaviour may be shared with members of the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) in order to seek advice on how best to address the behaviour and needs of the child.

1 An individualised behaviour programme will be put in place to support the student. When put in place, such plans must be adhered to and reviewed regularly, staff must be aware of these plans and be familiar with implementation guidelines. Behaviour support plan's must also be signed by the students parents.

2 In exceptional circumstances, a shorter school day may be introduced to allow a student become accustomed to school routines and expectations. The plan will be shared with school staff and

parents/guardians to try to ensure consistent implementation. The plan will be monitored by the principal and school team to ensure its effectiveness.

DEALING WITH PHYSICALLY CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL

At times a small number of students engage in physically challenging behaviour. While staff make every effort to anticipate such incidents and to de-escalate the situation quickly, there are times when a behaviour intervention is required. School staff are trained in using CALM techniques which may be used in crisis situations to maintain the safety of a student or others.

Our school is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or violent behaviour, and will only use physical intervention as a last resort in the interest of safety and in the context of a respectful supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to students and staff. All incidents where a physical intervention was required will be reported to the BoM and to the NCSE.

The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying and health and safety.

In general physical intervention will only be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Where there is risk to their own safety and / or the safety of other pupils, staff or visitors.
- Where there is risk of **serious** damage to property
- Where a student's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline
- Where a student is committing a criminal offence

Any use of physical restraint must be:

- **Timely** – Should not be the first option, nor done at the onset of a known escalation sequence.
- **Measured** – Remove any physical contact as soon as the student is beginning to regain control. Use only enough physical contact to maintain and re-establish safety of the student.
- **Appropriate** – Consider the least amount of touch and force needed to manage the emergency and safety of all concerned. Consider the vulnerability of the student in relation to their experience of trauma and additional needs (sensory needs, medical considerations, and self-management).
- **Appropriately-trained persons** – Carried out by appropriately trained staff.
- **Reviewed** – Subsequently reviewed and a report prepared after each incident.

In assessing whether physical intervention is appropriate, staff shall take into account all the circumstances of the incident including the severity of the potential consequences, the likelihood of those consequences, and the effect of physical intervention on the child in question and the likely effectiveness of physical intervention in reducing risk.

All staff should be aware that the use of physical intervention in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour.

Staff must use professional judgement to decide if the situation constitutes a serious and imminent risk to the safety of the individual and others.

Gross Misbehaviour

Where serious behaviours of concern continue to disrupt the smooth running of the school and/or threaten the safety of others, a student will:

1. Be suspended
2. Have their school day reduced to protect the welfare of others.

Serious assault that causes injury to others, or that has the potential to cause serious harm or damage, will be considered gross misbehaviour and may lead to immediate suspension. A single incident may constitute gross misbehaviour. Such incident(s) will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management and the appropriateness of the placement for the student may need to be reviewed. The incident will be investigated to determine the appropriate response from the school.

In the case of the most serious incidents, or where there has been a continuum of serious misbehaviour, expulsion may be considered. This measure will only be used as a last resort. The Board of Management will ensure that:

- Fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of these procedures
- Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that fair procedures are accessible to those from different language or cultural backgrounds
- There are no undue delays in the investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion
- All matters to do with an investigation are dealt with in confidence
- In circumstances of particular complexity, the school authorities may seek legal advice to support their decision making.

Procedure relating to suspension

For the purposes of this document, suspension is defined as:

'Requiring the student to absent him/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days' (Developing a Code of Behaviour: A Guide to Schools NEWB 2008)

In general, but not always, before serious sanctions such as suspension/expulsion are used, communication between the school and parents will take place.

During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend and the authority to suspend a child for up to three school days has been delegated to the principal. Where a BOM meeting cannot be called in a timely fashion, the Board has also delegated to the Principal the power to suspend a pupil for up to 5 school days subject to the Chairperson of the Board agreeing to the proposed suspension.

The grounds for suspension include:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of others or to the teaching process
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to the safety and welfare of others or to the pupil's own safety and wellbeing
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

The principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of others. Parents / guardians may be requested to collect a student from school during the day if their continued presence constitutes a threat. Parents/guardians may be asked to keep a student home from school for a number of days and this form of suspension will be notified to parents/guardians by the principal. A parent/guardian may also be requested to collect their child from school if an incident has occurred and due to staff injury there remains a health and safety risk in supporting the students for the remainder of the school day.

All suspensions, for whole days or part of a day will be recorded by the principal and reported to the BOM.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. The school will arrange, where possible, for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Administrative Steps relating to Suspension

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

Step 1: Inform the student and parents

Let the student and their parents know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents in writing has the benefit there is a permanent record letting the parents know. It also ensures that parents are 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.

Step 2: Give an opportunity to respond

Save where an immediate suspension is warranted on health and safety grounds, parents and student should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the student and their parents provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. 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 student's behaviour. If a student 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 negative behaviour. The school should record the invitations made to parents and their response.

Step 3: Decision as to whether to suspend the student or not.

Having heard what the parents and/or student has to say, the Principal (or where appropriate the Board) will make a decision as to whether to suspend the student or not, and the period of suspension to be imposed.

Step 4: Follow up

As soon as possible after the decision to suspend has been taken, the Principal should notify the parents/guardians and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- where applicable, the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) (Education Act 1998, section 29).

In the event of a student being suspended, the school will notify school transport of this fact and the date of return to school for the student.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, safety of school property, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. It should be noted that this preliminary investigation is likely to be brief and will not involve the parents having a right to respond at the initial stage. A formal investigation (during which there will be full rights of fair procedure in relation to a right to a response etc. in accordance with Steps 1-4 above) should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. Under no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

Administrative Suspensions

In certain exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may apply an administrative suspension. Such a suspension is not intended to be punitive or disciplinary in nature, but is solely a management tool to allow the school an opportunity to pursue certain specified steps in relation to a student. For example, the Board of Management may deem that it is necessary to obtain funding for certain construction works or building upgrades in order to safely accommodate a particular child. Equally, it may be necessary to obtain

certain training for staff members, additional staff supports, provide respite for staff or to gain additional clinical supports. Where it is necessary for the student to be out of the school until those supports or funding have been obtained, the Board of Management may, in its absolute discretion, place the child on an administrative suspension until those works or support or funding has been procured and completed. The administrative suspension shall be reviewed every 10 school days and the ongoing necessity for same will be discussed by the Board of Management on each such occasion. An opportunity will be afforded to the parents to make submissions to the Board in relation to the administrative suspension and the necessity for same.

The BOM can place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year to 20 days or more.

Expulsion

A student is expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently him/her from the school. The BOM has the authority to expel a student; however, expulsion is a sanction of last resort and will only be considered in an extreme of gross misbehaviour that seriously disrupts the smooth and safe running of the school. This measure will generally only be undertaken after every effort has been made to support, help and address behaviours of concern. However, a single serious incident may be considered grounds for expulsion.

Before finalising the expulsion of a student, the BOM will notify the local Education Welfare Office in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Grounds for expulsion:

- The pupil's behaviour is a consistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- Continued presence of the pupil in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the pupil's own safety and well-being.
- Continued presence of the pupil in school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety and well-being of others.
- Single incident or a series of incidents of significant, dangerous or serious wrongdoing.
- Significant damage to school property.

Non-exhaustive list of examples which may warrant expulsion:

The Board may impose expulsion as a sanction in cases such as the following. Please note that this list is for information purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive. Other scenarios may arise in which the Board deem expulsion is warranted.

- Sexual assault
- Possession of and/or supplying illegal drugs
- Actual violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff
- Attempted violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff
- Attempted or actual self-harm resulting in the occurrence of potentially serious physical injury where the school judges that it can no longer meet the pupil's needs by adequately providing for the pupil's health, safety and well-being when at school
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

Procedures in relation to Expulsion:

1. A detailed investigation of the incident(s) of gross misbehaviour will be undertaken by/at the direction of the School Principal including interviews with all relevant parties, witnesses and the alleged wrongdoer. As part of this investigation, the Principal will meet with the pupil and his/her parents. At this meeting, the parents will have the opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) and make any submissions they wish to make in relation to the nature of the sanctions to be applied or how the pupil's behaviour might be managed without the school having to resort to expelling the pupil. The pupil's parents should be provided with copies of the relevant documentation before this meeting in order that they be aware of the nature and extent of the allegations against their child.
2. The Principal will provide a written report to the Board of Management outlining the facts of the matter as ascertained by the Principal and the Principal's recommendations in relation to sanctions.
3. Where the Principal is recommending expulsion as a possible sanction, the Principal's report should be furnished to the parents of the pupil at least 5 working days before the hearing referred to below or any rate sufficient time must be allowed to them to review the report and be aware of what allegations are being investigated as part of this process. If statements have been taken as part of the investigation or evidence gathered, the parents are entitled to copies of such statements (redacted if necessary) and details of the evidence which will be considered by the Board of Management. In certain scenarios, e.g. the statement has been given in confidence and on the understanding that it will not be shared with the pupil and/or their parents or where the making of the statement would put the person at risk (whether of reprisal or otherwise), the Board may provide portions or excerpts of the statement/evidence or may decline to provide the document or evidence at all.
4. The Board of Management will then consider the school principal's report and recommendations. If the Board decides to consider expelling the pupil, it will hold a hearing at which the child's parents/guardian can make submissions.

5. Having held the hearing, and having heard the pupil's parents' submissions, the Board of Management will withdraw to consider the appropriate sanction and the Principal's recommendations in light of the following factors:
 - 5.1. The nature, scale and persistence of the behaviour in question,
 - 5.2. The effect of the behaviour on the school community (staff and pupils) – in particular their health and safety,
 - 5.3. The previous behaviour and conduct of the pupil,
 - 5.4. Any contrition or attempts by the pupil to reform their behaviour,
 - 5.5. The merits of any explanation of justification offered by or on behalf of the pupil
 - 5.6. Attempts (short of expulsion) made by the Principal and staff to divert, correct or check the behaviour and the effectiveness of those attempts,
 - 5.7. The duty of the school to provide an education for its students and whether the continued enrolment of the student affects or limits the Board's ability to discharge this duty,
 - 5.8. The duty of care owed by the school to its employees, pupils and to visitors to the school and whether the continued enrolment of the pupil affects or limits the Board's ability to meet this duty of care.
 - 5.9. The educational interests of the student concerned and the desirability of enabling him or her to participate in and benefit from education with his or her peers,
 - 5.10. The educational interests of and the effective provision of education for other students of the school and the maintenance of a classroom and school environment which is supportive of learning amongst all students in the school and ensures continuity of instruction provided to students, such other matters as the Board of Management considers relevant.
6. Based on the foregoing considerations, any submissions from the parents and the Principal's Report, the Board will then make a decision as to whether or not to exclude the pupil.
7. If the Board of Management recommends expulsion, the Board of Management will set a date on which the expulsion will become effective at least 20 school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer is notified of the proposed expulsions.
8. If the Board deems it necessary, the pupil may be suspended for the period before the Board meets again to confirm the expulsion in accordance with step 11 below.
9. The Education Welfare Officer is informed of the proposal to expel the pupil and the effective date of that proposal.
10. The Education Welfare Officer will arrange consultations with the appropriate parties.
11. At least 20 school days after the EWO was notified of the proposed expulsion, the Board will meet again to decide whether or not to confirm the decision to expel the pupil.

12. Confirmation of the decision of the Board of Management (and if relevant, the effective date of the expulsion) is sent in writing by registered post or a recorded delivery method to the parents of the pupil.
13. Parents of the pupil are informed of their rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998.

APPEALS

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, gives parents (and students over the age of 18) the right to appeal a decision to expel or suspend a child for cumulative period of 20 school days in an academic year. The appeal must be made by the parents/guardian to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. Appeals must be lodged within 42 calendar days from the date the decision has been notified to parents.

RECORD KEEPING/ MONITORING/ RECORDING BEHAVIOUR

A system of Record Keeping/Monitoring/Recording behaviour will be implemented throughout the school. This will enable the school to balance subjective opinion with factual information about what is actually happening and to review triggers or patterns of behaviour over time. It will use consistent terminology. Regular monitoring will:

- Alert school staff to emerging problems for a particular student /group of students
- Show trends and patterns, for example, the time of day, location or circumstances associated with either poor behaviour or instances of particularly good behaviour
- Provide information about successes and what is working well
- Avoid the risk of labelling a student unfairly from class to class or year to year, by providing factual data for any judgement about behaviour

A record system will allow the school to track an individual student's behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the student to deal with unacceptable behaviour will be recorded, including contact with parents or referral to clinicians. Positive responses by a student and evidence of changed behaviour will also be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed. These records, along with copies of all communication with parents/ guardians will be retained in the pupils files, which are kept in the secretary's office. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year. Parents and students will be made aware that a record is being kept and will have access to the information at all times. All reports will be managed within the school in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

The principal will monitor all records and will make an annual report to the Board of Management.

RESPONDING TO BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

Every attempt will be made to address behaviours of concern through pre-emptive interventions as outlined in our guiding principles and proactive strategies above. We acknowledge however that there are times when behaviours of concern will result in crisis situations. A crisis situation is

defined in the guidelines as “times when behaviours of concern present serious risk of imminent physical harm to the student concerned and/or others within the school environment.” (pg. 38). At these times intervention may be necessary. Two kinds of response to crisis were considered in the Guidelines; seclusion and physical intervention

1. Seclusion:

- Seclusion should not be used under any circumstances in the school setting.
- Seclusion is placing a student involuntarily in any environment on their own and physically prevented from leaving
- Physical prevention can be through the use of a locked door, a blocked door or a door being held closed.
- Seclusion includes a situation where the student believes that they cannot leave a space although there is no physical block

2. Physical Restraints

- Physical restraint is any procedure where one or more adults restricts a student's physical movement or access to their own body
- Restraint is used only in crisis situations where not to do so could result in serious harm or injury to the pupil or others
- Restraint should only be used in these emergency situations and used with the least amount of force and for the shortest amount of time needed
- Restraint must be timely – not the first option, measured, appropriate, carried out by trained staff and reviewed subsequent to the event

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT INVOLVING PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS:

- The incident must be reported to the school principal and subsequently, to the BOM.

‘Any procedure where one or more adults restrict a student's physical movement or normal access to his or her own body. It is an intervention used in crisis situations when not to do so could result in serious physical harm or injury to the student or others’ (Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations; Guidelines for schools in supporting students, 2024)

- Schools are required to report instances of physical restraint to the NCSE. The reporting template for this can be found in the resource section of the Behaviour Guidelines

3. Interim safety response: when unexpected crisis situations occur and cause of behaviour is not established

- Conduct a dynamic risk assessment
- Step back and evaluate what immediate action is necessary
- Assess threat
- Find help
- Evaluate Options
- Continual Monitoring of situation

4. Post Crisis

- Provide space for pupil to recover
- Debrief with staff and ensure their safety
- Inform parents of the incident
- Inform Principal and Board of Management of any use of physical restraint
- As of September 2025, Report use of physical restraint to the NCSE

5. Recording

- All incidents of behaviour of concern will be recorded on school forms
- Incidents will be reported to parents
- Records are made available to Behaviour Analyst for Functional Analysis.
- Patterns of behaviour will be analysed with a view to identifying "triggers".
- Data on behaviours will be used to draw up individual positive behaviour support plans.
- PBSPs must be adhered to and reviewed regularly.
- Once agreed, staff must be aware of these plans and be familiar with implementation guidelines.

Sanctions and Restorative Responses

- In cases of frequent incidents of behaviours of concern, sanctions may be necessary
- A sanction is a form of positive intervention and should be used to help the pupil. The aim of any sanction is to try to discourage inappropriate behaviour recurring again while fostering learning and growth
- Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour and be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the pupil. Sanctions, as far as possible should relate to and be applied as near as possible to the unacceptable behaviour.
- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- It must be made clear what change in behaviour are required to avoid further sanctions
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

Ladder of Referral

The following steps will be taken by members of teaching staff when a pupil has engaged in significant behaviours of concern. The school will use/apply sanctions in accordance with the level of understanding of the pupil

The steps are listed in order of severity:

1. **Verbal/Visual Guidance:** offer a clear, calm reminder of expectations supported with visuals.
2. **Self -Regulation:** provide supervised space in a quiet area to calm and self-regulate.

3. **Parental Collaboration:** Communication with parents to coordinate and agree strategies to address behaviour of concern.
4. **Adjustment of PBSP:** Revise behaviour support plan as necessary in collaboration with parents and BA.
5. **Meeting with Principal:** Principal and class teacher meet with parents regarding behaviour.
6. **Suspension/expulsion:** Only as a last resort and in accordance with Rule 130 of 16 Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000. See Appendix 1 for detailed procedures.

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area as a sanction, except on the grounds of health and safety. Suspension may be considered in the case of significant behaviours of concern or repeated instances of crisis situations leading to a health and safety risk to the pupil, other children and/or to staff or school property.

Strategies may be developed and implemented to assist the pupil and may include individual timetables, individual behaviour management programmes with specific incentive schemes, and development of appropriate management techniques. These measures will be reviewed, monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis for individual pupils. For serious incidents where the health and safety of others is compromised, suspension/expulsion needs to be considered by the principal and the Board of Management. Procedures in relation to Suspension/Expulsion can be found in Appendix 1.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy
- School Attendance
- Bí Céinalta
- Physical Intervention/ Restrictive Practice
- Health and Safety Statement
- Parent School Communication Policy
- Data Protection Policy

POLICY REVIEW

The school will be happy to discuss any concerns a parent/guardian may have about behaviour or about any aspect of the Code of Behaviour. The school will provide parents with a copy of the code and will require parents to sign up to supporting the code prior to the enrolment of a student.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of BOM in December 2025.

St. Michael's House SNS Baldoyle
Willie Nolan Road, Baldoyle

Signed: *Nuala Melen*

Chairperson, BOM

A. Howard Perito
Date for review: September 2026

03/12/25

Significant Incident Report

Date of Incident:

Time of Incident:

1	<i>Names of staff members and/or pupils involved in the incident.</i>
2	<i>Names of any additional staff members who witnessed the incident.</i>
3	<i>Name of the pupil/pupils displaying the behaviour of concern.</i>
4	<i>Please identify the specific location where the incident occurred.</i>
5	<i>Tick the type of behaviour that was involved in this incident.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Self-injurious behaviour<input type="radio"/> Aggression towards others<input type="radio"/> Damage to property<input type="radio"/> Refusal to engage with activities<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)
6	<i>Before the incident: Tick the appropriate box to indicate what was happening prior to the behaviour of concern. Provide additional details if required.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Person had experienced a physical difficulty (e.g. seizure, illness, tiredness)<input type="radio"/> During group work<input type="radio"/> During individual work<input type="radio"/> No specific activity<input type="radio"/> Time of transition (e.g. to or from playground/ canteen)<input type="radio"/> Environment noisy/ hot/ crowded (please specify)<input type="radio"/> Change in staffing<input type="radio"/> Engaging in compulsive behaviours<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)
7	<i>Outline what occurred. Include any injuries that may have occurred and how such injuries have been treated.</i>

8	Was there any damage to personal and/or school property?
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
9	If the answer to 8 is YES, please detail any damage here.
10	Were CALM techniques used?
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
11	If the answer to 10 is YES, please detail the techniques used.
12	After the incident: Indicate what happened to manage the behaviour of concern/ after the behaviour of concern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Change in demands on person (e.g. work removed, person given preferred activity, etc) ○ Changes in social interaction with the person (e.g. interact with the person, ignore behaviour, etc) ○ Changes in location (e.g. leave the classroom) ○ Use of visual prompts ○ Person promoted to use a particular strategy (e.g. PECS book). Specify _____ ○ Other (please specify)
13	What strategies have been adopted to reduce the risk of this happening again (consult with all classroom staff)?
13	For teachers only, please answer for every incident: – did you notify the parents of the pupil(s)?
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> Date & Time parents were notified: _____
14	If the answer to 13 is YES, what was the response of the parents? If the answer is NO, why did you not contact the parents?
15	How many staff members were needed to manage this incident safely?
16	Were you or another staff member hurt?
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
17	If the answer to 16 is YES please detail the nature of any injuries sustained.

18	<i>Did you know your role during the incident?</i>
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
19	<i>Did you find this incident distressing?</i>
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
20	<i>If the answer to 19 is YES, please rate this distress from 1 – 5 where 1 indicates the lowest level of distress and 5 the highest.</i>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Signature:

Date:

Amended September 2025