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**Gaelscoil  
na Mara**

Domhnach Bat  
Co Átha Cliath  
K36WT02

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## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school.

In Gaelscoil na Mara, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. 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.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

## **2. AIMS**

The aims of this policy are:

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach and pupils to learn without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

### 3. GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL – SCHOOL RULES

#### **General school rules:**

- We communicate entirely through Irish except during English lessons
- We have respect for ourselves and others
- We are kind and willing to help others
- We show courtesy, good manners and honesty
- We show respect for our own property and the property of others
- We show respect other students and their learning
- We follow instructions from staff immediately
- We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- We ask permission to leave the classroom/yard/school
- We always try our best
- We wear the appropriate uniform proudly

#### **Classroom rules**

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

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based on our school rules. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible, they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. ‘Walk’ and not, ‘Don’t run’). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual differences. Where difficulties arise, parents/guardians will be contacted at an early stage.

#### **The essential classroom rules include:**

1. Speak as *Gaeilge* at all times, except during English lessons
2. Good manners are expected at all times
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same
4. Raise hand wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property
6. Ensure you are safe in class and make it safe for others
7. Adhere to classroom structures and follow instructions
8. **NO** electronic devices or mobile phones permitted on the school grounds

## ***Playground Rules***

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited.

Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without permission of the supervising teacher, this includes re-entering the school building.

The essential yard rules include:

1. Seek permission from the supervising teacher to leave the yard for any reason
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated
3. Speak as *Gaeilge* at all times
4. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
5. Leave lunches and toys in the classroom
6. Respect the personal space of others
7. Stay clear of fire alarm and respect all school property
8. Follow staff instructions immediately
9. Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.

## ***Behaviour in the school environment, during after-school activities and on school outings***

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

When pupils participate in after-school activities or go on school outings, they are expected to fully adhere to general school rules. They should always co-operate fully with school staff. Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school.

## 4. STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Part of the vision of Gaelscoil na Mara is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Class teachers use a variety of motivational systems e.g. Class Dojo, stamp books, star charts. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards, by consistent effort as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work. Rewards will be given for effort made, not just for achievement.

**The following are some examples of how praise and encouragement might be given:**

- a quiet word or gesture to show approval
- a comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- a visit to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation
- a word of praise in front of a group or class
- delegating some special responsibility or privilege e.g. merit certificate, extra golden time
- a mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- school recognition e.g. Cairde sa Chlós, Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine, Cárta Glas (Gaeilge Snasta - Gaeilge in the yard)
- *Bualadh Bos* in class, on the yard or special mention at assembly

## 5. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

**Examples of minor misbehaviour include:**

- bringing electronic equipment or mobile phones into classrooms
- not wearing appropriate uniform
- behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- telling lies
- speaking English
- not following instructions

**Examples of serious misbehaviour include:**

- behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- rude or disrespectful behaviour
- using bad language
- behaviour that repeatedly interferes with teaching and learning
- threats or physical hurt to another person
- speaking English repeatedly
- damage to property
- theft
- leaving school/school activities without permission

**Examples of gross misbehaviour include:**

- repeated and sustained minor or serious misbehaviours (despite intervention and earlier sanction)
- assault on a staff member or another pupil
- bringing dangerous implements to school
- serious theft
- serious damage to property
- serious bullying (of a continuing nature despite intervention)
- carrying drugs, alcohol, tobacco, cigarettes, e-cigarettes or other vaping devices

**Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

- **PHYSICAL:** includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- **VERBAL:** name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates
- **EMOTIONAL:** threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. “Cyber/text” bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a

teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. **The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.** This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

**ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR, WHILE NOT TO BE CONDONED, CANNOT BE DESCRIBED AS BULLYING.**

## **6. SANCTIONS**

**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 following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is not exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this. In the case of serious or gross misbehaviours, pupils may be referred directly to the Principal.

- Reasoning with pupil
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Communication with parents/guardians – this may be a written note/Aladdin or a phone call
- Loss of privileges e.g. golden time, extra sport session, going on a class trip
- Referral to Principal

- Principal communicating with parents/guardians
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

## 7. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the individual circumstances.

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 their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil 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/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet 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 involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and 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/guardians.

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 Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a 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.

## **8. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL 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/guardians and the class teacher, special educational needs team, and 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 individuals.

## **9. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents/guardians 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/guardians have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians 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 are to be used within the school:**

- Informal/formal parent/teacher communication
- Aladdin
- Communication notebooks as part of a specific behaviour plan
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School Website
- Newsletters

## **10. REFERENCE TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES**

There will be a large overlap between a number of our school policies. The following policies will be impacted by and have an impact on our Code of Behaviour:

- SPHE plan
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Health & Safety statement
- Special Educational Needs policy
- Admission and Participation policy
- Child Protection policy
- School Attendance strategy
- Parental Complaints Procedures
- Code of Conduct for Parents

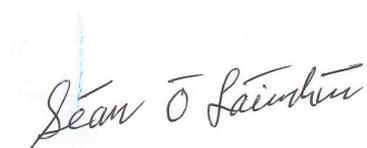
## 11. REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

This policy will be subject to ongoing review in light of legislative changes or other similar requirements.

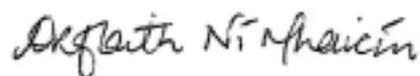
This policy was presented to and ratified by the Board of Management of Gaelscoil na Mara on 14/09/2023

This policy was reviewed on 24/09/24

Sínithe:



Cathaoirleach



Príomhoide