

Code of Behaviour Scoil Ursula

1. Introduction

This Code of Behaviour has been developed in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the guidelines of Tusla / National Educational Welfare Board, and Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools. It reflects the Catholic ethos of Scoil Ursula and supports the holistic development of each pupil in a safe, respectful and faith-filled environment.

The Code sets out: - The standards of behaviour expected of pupils - The measures used to promote positive behaviour - The procedures for responding to inappropriate behaviour - The procedures for suspension and expulsion - The school's approach to behaviours of concern

This Code applies during school hours, on school grounds, on school-related activities, and on any activity organised by or on behalf of the school.

2. Catholic Ethos and Characteristic Spirit of the School

Scoil Ursula is a Catholic primary school inspired by the Ursuline tradition and the teachings of St Angela Merici. Ursuline education seeks to nurture each child spiritually, morally, socially and intellectually in an atmosphere where difference is respected and each person's dignity is upheld.

Guided by Gospel values, the school community strives to foster: - Respect for the dignity and uniqueness of every person - Courtesy, kindness and compassion in relationships - Responsibility for self, others and the environment - Forgiveness, reconciliation and fresh beginnings

This Code of Behaviour supports these values by promoting positive conduct while also providing clear, fair and consistent responses to behaviour that undermines the safety or wellbeing of the school community.

3. Objectives of the Code of Behaviour

The objectives of this Code of Behaviour are:

- To foster an atmosphere in the school which promotes the holistic development of each pupil and allows positive relationships to flourish
 - To create a safe and secure learning environment for all pupils by promoting mutual respect among all members of the school community
 - To nurture self-discipline and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour
 - To make every effort to match teaching and learning approaches to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil
 - To ensure that teachers and parents are aware of the procedures for addressing challenging behaviour and infringements of school rules
-

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- Upholds the ethos and characteristic spirit of the school
- Ratifies and reviews the Code of Behaviour
- Supports the Principal and staff in its implementation

- Exercises authority in relation to suspension and expulsion

Principal

- Has responsibility for the day-to-day management of behaviour
- Ensures the Code is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Maintains records of serious incidents and sanctions
- Reports suspensions to the Board of Management and Tusla as required

Staff

- Foster a positive classroom and school climate
- Teach, model and reinforce expected standards of behaviour
- Respond to misbehaviour in a calm, respectful and consistent manner
- Record and report serious or persistent behavioural concerns

Parents/Guardians

- Support the school's ethos and Code of Behaviour
- Encourage positive behaviour and respect for school rules
- Communicate promptly with the school regarding concerns
- Cooperate with the school in addressing behavioural difficulties

Pupils

- Treat others with respect, courtesy and kindness
 - Take responsibility for their behaviour and actions
 - Follow school rules and cooperate with staff
 - Contribute positively to the life of the school
-

5. Standards of Behaviour

Pupils are expected to:

- Show respect for themselves, others and property
- Speak and act with courtesy and honesty
- Follow instructions from all members of staff
- Behave in a manner that allows all pupils to learn safely
- Take responsibility for their actions

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, inappropriate language, aggression or deliberate damage to property will not be tolerated.

6. School Rules, Routines and Expectations

Clear rules and routines help to ensure the safe, orderly and effective running of the school and support pupils in developing responsibility and self-discipline.

- The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for pupils:
 - Arriving before the official opening time of **8.50 a.m.**
 - Remaining on the school premises after closing time (**2.30 p.m.**, or **1.30 p.m.** for Infant classes), except for authorised school-based activities
 - Travelling to and from school, including travel to and from buses
- Pupils are expected to respond promptly to the school bell at all times
- Parents/guardians must notify the school where:
 - A pupil needs to leave during school hours

- A pupil arrives late to school
 - A written explanation / reason given on Aladdin is required for all absences. In accordance with statutory requirements, pupils who are absent for **20 days or more** in a school year will be reported to Tusla / Educational Welfare Services
 - Healthy lunches are encouraged. Chewing gum, crisps, fizzy drinks and glass bottles are not permitted
 - The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils who cycle to school must dismount before entering the school grounds and ensure bicycles are locked securely
 - For safety reasons, pupils or parents may not use the staff entrance gate. The designated pedestrian entrance must be used at all times
 - Full school uniform must be worn daily. The navy tracksuit worn as part of the current school uniform must be plain and unbranded. Leggings are not permitted. Where shorts are worn during the summer months, they must be plain navy, unbranded, of an appropriate length to the knee and of a loose fit, in line with school trousers. (Please note that a new school uniform is expected to be introduced from September 2026. Parents/guardians will receive full details in advance. Until then, the current uniform policy applies)
 - All personal belongings, including uniforms and coats, must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name
 - Sensible, sturdy footwear must be worn in the interests of safety and hygiene.
 - Mobile phones, wearable devices and personal electronic devices are strictly prohibited
 - Pupils are expected to present for school in a neat and appropriate manner; make-up fake tan, artificial or gel nails, false eyelashes, and body piercings other than one small stud in each lower earlobe are not permitted
-

Behaviour Expectations

Pupils are expected to demonstrate refined behaviour at all times, including: -

- Speaking politely and using courteous language such as *please, thank you, sorry* and *excuse me*
 - Showing good manners and respect towards other pupils and adults
 - Acting honestly at all times
 - Refraining from the use of inappropriate or offensive language
 - Showing consideration for others during all school-related activities, including games, extracurricular activities and school outings
 - Refraining from all forms of bullying (see our Bí Cineálta Policy)
 - Pupils who travel by bus are expected to: - Queue, board and alight in an orderly manner - Show courtesy and respect to the bus driver and other passengers
 - Pupils must obey the traffic warden at all times and must never cross the road without assistance.
 - Regular attendance and punctuality is expected of all pupils.
-

Behaviour Within the School Building

- Pupils must respect their teachers and cooperate fully during lessons
 - Disruptive, unsafe or attention-seeking behaviour that interferes with learning is not acceptable
 - School property and the property of others must be treated with care and respect. Where deliberate damage occurs, parents/guardians may be required to cover repair or replacement costs
 - Pupils must cooperate with and accept correction from all members of staff
 - Pupils are expected to move calmly and safely within the building, including walking in single file on stairs where appropriate
-

Playground Behaviour

- Designated play areas are supervised by teachers on a rota basis
 - Pupils must leave the school building during break times except on wet days, when supervised indoor arrangements apply
 - On yard, each class has a designated play area and pupils must remain within that space
 - Fighting, kicking, rough play or dangerous behaviour is prohibited
 - Litter must be disposed of appropriately in keeping with the school's Green Schools Code
 - Pupils may not leave the school grounds without permission under any circumstances
 - Climbing on walls, roofs, gates, railings or drainpipes is strictly forbidden
 - At the end of break time, pupils must stop playing promptly, remain calm and line up quietly when the whistle or bell sounds
-

7. Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

Scoil Ursula places a strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour through the development of strong, respectful relationships. We believe that praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement support pupils in developing self-discipline and responsibility.

Strategies used to promote positive academic and social behaviour include: -

- Building positive relationships between staff and pupils
- Teacher attention, encouragement and affirmation
- Motivating pupils through age-appropriate incentives and rewards
- Giving clear instructions and expectations
- Providing choices where appropriate
- Using non-verbal cues, prompts and reminders

Rewards and Recognition

Scoil Ursula places strong emphasis on recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and effort. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their conduct and contribution to school life.

Systems of reward may include:

- Merit awards
- Commendations
- Certificates of achievement, including *Student of the Month*
- Golden Time
- Homework passes
- Class-based reward systems

These approaches support a positive school climate and reinforce the values underpinning this Code of Behaviour.

8. Responding to and Decreasing Inappropriate Behaviour

Sanctions are sometimes necessary to show disapproval of and to discourage unacceptable behaviour. They are applied in a fair, consistent and proportionate manner, with due regard to the age, emotional development and individual circumstances of the pupil.

The school recognises that, at times, inappropriate behaviour may be linked to difficulties outside school. While resolving such difficulties may be beyond the remit of the school, reasonable account will be taken of these factors where appropriate, provided that the safety, wellbeing and learning of others are not compromised.

In seeking to decrease inappropriate behaviour, staff may use strategies such as:

- Ignoring minor disruptive behaviour where it is appropriate and safe to do so
- Redirecting the pupil towards appropriate behaviour
- Reminders and warnings
- Logical consequences and sanctions
- Time out or temporary separation from peers

Sanctions will take account of: - The pupil's behaviour record to date - The seriousness and impact of the behaviour

Senior Pupils – Additional Behaviour Procedures

In recognition of the increased responsibility expected of pupils in Fifth and Sixth Classes, Scoil Ursula operates an **additional behaviour procedure** to support positive conduct, leadership and appropriate representation of the school.

This procedure sets out clear expectations and a graduated response to repeated breaches of agreed standards, including a structured warning and consequence system. It is implemented by senior teaching staff and operates in line with the principles of fairness, proportionality and support outlined in this Code of Behaviour.

The Senior Class Behaviour Procedure supports, and does not replace, the whole-school staged approach to behaviour and is communicated separately to pupils and parents.

9. Staged Approach to Supporting Behaviour

The school operates a clear, graduated **nine-stage approach** to supporting pupils whose behaviour is ongoing, significant, or escalating. This staged approach ensures that behaviour is addressed at the appropriate level, that pupils are supported in a fair and consistent manner, and that escalation occurs only where necessary. Not all behaviours will require progression through every stage; serious incidents may result in immediate escalation.

The stages outlined below provide an overview only. Internal recording tools and documentation used by staff form part of school procedures but are not included in this Code of Behaviour.

Stage 1: Classroom-Based Support and Early Intervention

- Behaviour is managed by the class teacher using positive strategies and clear expectations
- Reminders, reasoning, guidance and corrective feedback are provided
- Supports for emotional regulation and appropriate behaviour within the classroom
- Minor or routine misbehaviour is addressed promptly and proportionately at class level

Stage 2: Classroom-Based Sanctions and Monitoring

- Continued use of proportionate classroom-based sanctions where behaviour persists
- Monitoring of behaviour over time to identify patterns or escalation
- Ongoing communication with parents/guardians is advised
- Behaviour remains under the management of the class teacher, with informal consultation as appropriate

Stage 3: Individual Behaviour Support

- a. Classroom based sanctions implemented e.g. Time out, chore or detention etc.
- b. Development of an individual Behaviour Plan in consultation with SET where behaviour persists.
Collaboration with the pupil to adopt structured targets and strategies to support regulation and behaviour
- c. Regular communication meetings with parents/guardians and class teacher and, where appropriate SET (minimum of 3 - using the 'Scoil Ursula Communication Meeting' document).
Parents/guardians will be informed that, should concerns persist, the next stage of the process may be Stage 4, involving a meeting with the discipline team.

Stage 4: Discipline Team Involvement

- Escalation to the allocated Assistant Principal where concerns continue
- Formal review of behaviour, supports and next steps
- Meeting with parents/guardians to follow the set structure of the 'Scoil Ursula Discipline Team Meeting' document.
- At least 2 members of the discipline team to be present.

Stage 5: Referral to Principal from Discipline Team

- Referral to the Principal where behaviour remains of serious concern
- Assessment of safety, wellbeing and impact on the school community
- Determination of appropriate next steps

Stage 6: Internal or External Suspension (**Section 12**)

Stage 7: External Suspension (**Section 12**)

Stage 8: Right of Appeal (**Section 12**)

Stage 9: Expulsion (**Section 13**)

Notwithstanding the above stages, the school reserves the right to proceed directly to suspension in cases of serious or gross misbehaviour, including but not limited to physical assault on another pupil or member of staff, where the behaviour poses a real and immediate risk to the safety or wellbeing of others. In such circumstances, it may be determined that it is neither appropriate nor safe to apply earlier stages of the Discipline Hierarchy. Fair procedures will apply, and parents/guardians will be informed without delay.

A child's age and stage of development will be taken into account when determining appropriate responses to incidents. Behaviours categorised as serious incidents (including physical assault) will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will not automatically result in suspension or exclusion.

Note: An internal suspension is not a prerequisite to an external suspension. Where applied, an internal suspension may involve removal from the pupil's base class and placement in another class for up to five school days.

11. Categories of Misbehaviour

For the purposes of clarity, consistency and transparency, misbehaviour is categorised as Minor, Serious or Gross. This categorisation supports staff in responding proportionately to behaviour in line with the school's staged approach to behaviour support.

The categorisation of behaviour will be determined by teachers and/or the Principal, using professional judgement and a common-sense approach, taking account of the nature, gravity, frequency and context of the behaviour.

The following lists are illustrative but explicit, and are intended to provide clarity to pupils, parents, staff and the Board of Management.

11.1 Minor Misbehaviour

Minor misbehaviour refers to low-level behaviours that interfere with teaching and learning or the orderly running of the school and are normally addressed at classroom level.

Examples include: - Interrupting class work - Running in the school building - Talking in class lines or during transitions - Leaving seat without permission - Being discourteous or unmannerly - Failure to complete homework without good reason, Pushing or minor physical contact in line, Interfering in the games or activities of others, Writing and passing notes during class

Persistent minor misbehaviour may be reclassified as serious misbehaviour.

11.2 Serious Misbehaviour

Serious misbehaviour refers to behaviour that significantly disrupts learning, challenges the authority of staff or negatively impacts the wellbeing of others.

Examples include:

- Repeated, ongoing or sustained bullying of others by physical, verbal or relational means, including threats, exclusion, cyber-bullying or gesture bullying
- Serious challenge to authority, including aggressive or threatening behaviour towards a teacher or any member of the school community (which may, depending on circumstances, be deemed gross misbehaviour)

- Racism in the form of verbal or physical abuse based on colour, creed or ethnic origin
- Theft
- Damage to school property or school furnishings
- Leaving the school premises during the school day without appropriate permission
- Use of unacceptable or offensive language
- Misuse of ICT or digital technologies
- Taking photographs, videos or audio recordings using any device
- Repeated failure to complete homework
- Refusal to engage in assigned classwork
- Name-calling directed at another pupil
- Swearing or abusive language directed at another pupil
- Throwing food at another pupil
- Rough play that risks injury to others

For pupils presenting with high-level behavioural concerns:

All significant behaviour must be recorded teachers.

Serious misbehaviour may result in escalation to senior staff and may lead to suspension in accordance with school procedures.

11.3 Gross Misbehaviour

Gross misbehaviour refers to behaviour of a **very serious nature** that poses a **real and immediate risk** to the safety, welfare or dignity of pupils or staff, or causes serious disruption to the life of the school.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Serious threat of violence or actual violent or sexual assault towards any pupil or staff member, causing bodily harm
- Bringing a violent, destructive or dangerous implement to school and either using it or threatening to use it
- Being in possession of illegal substances, as outlined in the school's Substance Use Policy
- Serious damage to school property or the property of others (e.g. cars)
- Behaviour that is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of the pupil constituting a real and significant threat to safety
- Leaving the school premises without permission where safety is compromised
- Serious defiance or refusal to comply with instructions during an incident where safety is at risk
- Deliberate spitting at another pupil or member of staff
- Throwing objects in a manner that could cause injury
- Physical fighting between pupils
- Persistent, targeted harassment or intimidation of another pupil

Gross misbehaviour will normally result in immediate suspension, pending further investigation and engagement with parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

School Trips and Outings

Student's behaviour on tours will comply with the standard set down in the school's code of behaviour. Where it is felt that a child's conduct would pose a safety risk or inhibit the educational benefit for self or others, the school management reserves the right to refuse the child permission to travel on school trips / tours / outings. Parents will be advised of this in advance.

12. Suspension

Definition and Authority

Suspension is a temporary exclusion of a pupil from school and from participation in school-related activities. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management has delegated authority in writing to the Principal to impose suspensions of up to **five school days**, subject to reporting requirements.

Suspensions exceeding five school days require a decision of the Board of Management. Where the cumulative total of suspension days reaches **20 days or more in a school year**, the school is required to notify Tusla/Education Welfare Services and parents/guardians are informed of their right to appeal under **Section 29 of the Education Act 1998**.

Grounds for Suspension

Suspension may be considered where a pupil's behaviour, despite appropriate interventions and supports, results in one or more of the following:

- Serious disruption to teaching and learning
- A significant threat to the safety or wellbeing of pupils, staff or others
- Serious damage to school property or the property of others
- A single incident of serious or gross misbehaviour

Suspension is not imposed for minor misbehaviour and is used only where proportionate and necessary.

Immediate Suspension

Immediate suspension may be imposed where a pupil's behaviour presents an **immediate and serious risk** to safety or wellbeing. This may include:

- Physical assault or serious threats of violence
- Possession or use of a weapon or dangerous object
- Absconding or leaving the school premises without permission where safety is compromised
- Serious defiance or refusal to comply with instructions during an incident where safety is at risk

In such cases, the Principal may suspend the pupil immediately, pending further investigation and engagement with parents/guardians.

Suspensions may range from **one to five school days**, depending on the nature, severity and context of the behaviour.

Presumptive Short-Term Suspension for Serious Misconduct

The Board of Management recognises that certain behaviours are of such seriousness that a short-term suspension of between one and three school days will normally apply, subject to fair procedures and consideration of individual circumstances.

The following behaviours will normally result in a short-term suspension:

- Verbal abuse or credible threat directed at a staff member (normally 2-3 days)
- Initiating a physical altercation (normally 2–3 days)
- Participating in a physical altercation (normally 2–3 days)
- Persistent insubordination during the school day (normally 1-2 days)
- Gross insubordination during an incident involving aggression or safety concerns (normally 2-3 days)
- Absconding from school premises where safety is compromised (normally 3 days for first offence)
- Physical aggression toward a staff member (normally up to 5 days)

While these sanctions will normally apply, the Principal retains discretion to adjust the duration of suspension where mitigating or aggravating factors arise, including the pupil's age, additional needs, previous record, and the specific context of the incident.

Suspension decisions are made on the balance of probabilities following investigation and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Fair Procedures

Before a decision to suspend is taken, the school will ensure that fair procedures are followed, including:

The following procedures apply where suspension is being considered:

1. The Principal (or delegated staff member) will review the available information relating to the alleged incident.
2. The pupil will be informed of the nature of the alleged behaviour and that suspension is being considered.
3. The pupil will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation, appropriate to their age, understanding and the circumstances of the incident.
4. The Principal will consider:
 - The seriousness of the behaviour
 - The context in which it occurred
 - The impact on others
 - Any relevant mitigating or aggravating factors
 - The pupil's previous record (where relevant)
5. Parents/guardians will be informed without delay where suspension is being imposed.
6. Consideration of alternative or supportive interventions, where appropriate

In cases of immediate suspension, these procedures will be followed as soon as practicable after the suspension is imposed.

Communication and Records

- Parents/guardians are informed of the suspension without delay, normally by telephone and followed by written notification
 - Written notification outlines the reason for the suspension, its duration, and arrangements for return to school
 - A written record of the suspension is maintained by the school
 - Suspensions are reported to the Board of Management and to Tusla/Education Welfare Services as required
-

Appeals

- Suspensions of **three school days or more** may be appealed to the Board of Management
 - Section 29 appeal rights apply where the cumulative number of suspension days reaches **20 days or more** in a school year
-

Educational Provision During Suspension

During a period of suspension, the school will make reasonable efforts to support continuity of learning, having regard to the length of the suspension and the age of the pupil.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to support the pupil's learning and reflection during this period.

Reinstatement

A pupil returning from suspension is supported in making a **positive fresh start**, in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. This may include a reintegration meeting, review of expectations, and agreement on strategies to support positive behaviour going forward.

13. Procedures for Expulsion

Subsequent to the application of the school's suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, where serious or gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, a pupil may be recommended for permanent expulsion to the Board of Management.

Expulsion

Expulsion is a sanction of last resort and is the reserved function of the Board of Management. It is considered only after all reasonable interventions, supports and sanctions have been exhausted, or where the seriousness of the behaviour warrants immediate consideration of expulsion.

Grounds for Expulsion

A pupil may be considered for expulsion where one or more of the following apply:

- The pupil's behaviour, despite the implementation of appropriate supports, interventions and sanctions, is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety of pupils or staff
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to school property or the property of others

Authority and Decision-Making

Authority to expel a pupil is reserved to the Board of Management.

In determining the appropriateness of expulsion, the Board of Management will have regard to the factors to be considered before proposing to expel a pupil, as outlined in national guidelines. These factors are similar to those considered in relation to suspension and include the nature, gravity and impact of the behaviour, the pupil's age and circumstances, and the effectiveness of previous interventions.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be expelled for a first offence. Such circumstances may include:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or a member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils within the school
- Sexual assault

Procedures

All expulsion procedures will be conducted in accordance with statutory requirements and principles of fair procedures, including the right to be heard, clear communication with parents/guardians, and appropriate reporting to Tusla/Education Welfare Services.

14. Review and Ratification

This Code of Behaviour is reviewed regularly by the Board of Management.

Ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Ursula

Date: 12 Feb 2026