

# **The Code of Behaviour**

## **Corpus Christi National School**



### **Policy Review**

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed in consultation with pupils, staff, Board Management and the Parents Association of Corpus Christi National School.

**Code of Behaviour Corpus Christi National School**

### **Introductory Statement**

Corpus Christi National School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

This policy was prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board.

### **Rationale**

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23(1) schools are obliged to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

- the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
- the measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
- the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned
- the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
- the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school

Corpus Christi National School has deemed it necessary to review and update our Code of Behaviour to ensure compliance with the following legislation and guidelines:

- Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013
- Children First National Guidance 2015
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Data Protection 1998 -2018 and EU General Data Personal Regulation 2018 (GDPR)

### **Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school**

Corpus Christi National School is a Catholic school which aims to provide a caring environment where management, staff and parents work in partnership through mutual respect to develop the spiritual, personal and academic potential of each child according to their talents, skills and abilities. Respect for others and co-operation amongst pupils, parents, staff and the Board of Management are the guiding factors in our Code of Behaviour.

The Code of Behaviour of Corpus Christi National School has been devised in the context of a nurturing and supportive environment where pupils are encouraged to care and respect each other and all members of the school community. The Code of Behaviour reflects the positive ethos of our school and the five core values we aspire to instil in our pupils:

- **Honesty** • **Kindness** • **Respect** • **Responsibility** • **Courtesy**

In our school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on these core values. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles. Central to this policy is the belief that all pupils have a right to learn in a positive, non-disruptive environment where improvement and achievement are celebrated. At Corpus Christi National School, we encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions as they progress through primary school. We view all misbehaviour as an opportunity to learn and grow.

All children need boundaries set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for cooperation. Therefore, any rules we set will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences. Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff. This Code of Behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

### **Aims of the Code**

- to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- 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 without disruption
- to foster and encourage a strong sense of community and co-operation between staff, pupils, parents and board members
- to ensure that the system of rules and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

### **Content of policy**

In our Code of Behaviour, we address the following:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour – roles and responsibilities
3. Behaviour expectations
4. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
5. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour
6. Suspension/Expulsion
7. Scope
8. Success criteria
9. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

10. Reference to other policies

11. Review

## **1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school**

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the Code of Behaviour shall specify 'the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school.' In compliance with Section 23 (4) of the Education Act, prior to registering a pupil, parents/guardians will be issued with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and on application, parents/guardians will be asked to confirm in writing that they accept the school's policy '*and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code*'.

## **2. Whole School Approach to promoting positive behaviour- Roles and Responsibilities**

Staff members, supported by the Board of Management, adopt a positive approach to discipline within the school. Children are encouraged and praised for their efforts in maintaining discipline. The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

- an ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony
- a teamwork approach to behaviour
- a whole school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- an inclusive and involved school community
- a systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy

### **The Role of the Board of Management**

The Board of Management has responsibility for governing the school on behalf of the Patron and for the benefit of the students, parents and staff. The Board recognises that promoting good behaviour and preventing misbehaviour are the main goals of the Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management will ensure where possible that:

- The Code of Behaviour is informed by the principles of fairness and administered in a fair and impartial manner.
- The school's policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour are implemented in the school.
- A stimulating and happy atmosphere, which is conducive to teaching and learning, is fostered in the school.
- No student is discriminated against.
- The Principal, staff, parents and students will be supported in regard to the administration of a fair and efficient code of behaviour.
- The Code of Behaviour is ratified and reviewed at least once in the Board's term of office.

### **The Role of Principal**

The Principal teacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school subject to the authority of the Board of Management and therefore has a central role in promoting good order and discipline.

The Principal teacher shall:

- encourage a sense of collective responsibility among staff, pupils and parents whilst fostering a sense of commitment to the school
- ensure that the policy of behaviour and discipline is implemented in a manner which is consistent and fair to all
- be supportive of individual teachers with regard to the administration of the code of behaviour
- ensure all staff members are familiar with the code of behaviour
- establish meaningful authority structures through which teachers may actively participate in the organization and management of the school
- establish meaningful structures and activities through which children may form an identity with the school, have a sense of belonging and benefit from school life
- to review the code of behaviour periodically

### **The Role of Staff**

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. The teacher has the responsibility for the effective implementation of the Code of Behaviour 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.

The quality of relationships between adults and students is one of the most important influences on student behaviour. Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, fairness and consistency.

All members of staff are expected to:

- provide a caring environment and to encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- adopt a positive approach to behaviour
- compile a list of rules/expectations as they pertain to each class group
- teach, discuss and explain the various rules/expectations as outlined in the school code of behaviour
- encourage fairness, social justice and recognise the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- foster and encourage a strong sense of community between staff, pupils and parents
- plan and organise their work and minimise the opportunities for disruption
- keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances gross breaches of discipline

- communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern

discourage physical aggression and encourage *Kind hands, Kind words, Kind feet*

### **The Role of the Pupil**

Pupils play an important role in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by:

- being involved in discussing class rules
- understanding the need for these rules
- discussing, monitoring and reviewing aspects of the code of behaviour at school assemblies

Pupils are expected to:

- be well behaved and to show respect and consideration for other children and adults
- show courtesy and consideration at all times
- have respect for their own property and the property of others
- have respect for the school building and its environs
- attend school and be punctual
- do their best both in school and for homework
- adhere to school rules

### **Children with Special Educational Needs**

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special educational needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place where necessary, in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special education teacher, and/or Principal. All school staff involved will work closely with parents to ensure that appropriate support is given. Cognitive development will be considered 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.

### **The Role of Parents**

Parents have a most important role in shaping the attitudes which produce good behaviour in school. Consequently, the school needs the support of parents in order to achieve a level of order which will ensure the optimal development of all its pupils. Clearly, therefore a high level of cooperation and communication between parents and school staff is essential. Parents are expected to:

- be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school
- explain the Code of Behaviour to their child
- give supportive co-operation to school staff in the interest and benefit of their children
- promote respect for teachers and other school personnel
- keep in contact with teachers regarding their child's progress

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- monitor and help children with homework, ensuring that it is completed
- ensure their child is punctual and collected on time
- be available to discuss matters that may arise
- co-operate with any rewards and sanctions
- ensure children's attendance is regular (The school is legally obliged to notify the Education Welfare Services in TUSLA when a child is absent for more than 20 school days annually)
- give a written explanation prior to a pre-arranged absence or following a child's absence. Explanations of absence are to be recorded on Aladdin Connect after 10:30am each day of absence
- write a note to the class teacher if their child needs to leave early for an appointment or phone the secretary's office in advance if a child needs to be withdrawn from class for an urgent family reason. A parent should collect the child from the secretary's office and sign her out.
- discuss any issues, other than minor matters, at mutually agreed pre-arranged meetings
- attend parent/guardian teacher meetings as necessary
- communicate any issue, which troubles you or your child at an early stage
- ensure children have the necessary books and materials for school
- ensure children have an adequate lunch in accordance with the school's healthy eating policy
- ensure children wear their school uniform

### **3. The Code of Behaviour – Expectations of pupils**

The core values of honesty, courtesy, kindness, respect and responsibility are fundamental to our school ethos and permeate our Code of Behaviour.

#### **Expected Behaviour in the school**

Each child is expected to:

- be courteous and respectful to all members of the school community and to all visitors to the school
- show respect by following the instructions of staff at all times. Any behaviour by a pupil or a group of pupils that interferes with teaching and learning will not be tolerated.
- show respect for the property of the school, equipment and materials
- show respect for her own property and the property of other children
- be kind and show a willingness to help others
- be honest and forthcoming with the truth
- show a willingness to use respectful ways to resolve conflict
- take responsibility for their own words and actions
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual. Truancy is not tolerated.
- take responsibility (age appropriate) for their own work
- have a positive attitude to school
- walk quietly in the school building
- wear the appropriate uniform on the assigned days
- follow our Healthy Eating policy. Chewing gum is not permitted.
- adhere to the *Kind hands, Kind words, Kind feet rule*



- be quiet and calm in the corridors so as not to hinder the work in classrooms nearby • receive permission before entering the staff room or the P.E equipment room
- use appropriate language. Foul language is not acceptable.
- behave well. Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) is not tolerated (See Anti-bullying policy).
- register her mobile phone with the Principal where relevant. Mobile phones must be switched off at all times (See Mobile phone policy). Smart watches are not allowed. remain on the school premises. Children should remain in the school yard in the morning before school. Children should not leave the school grounds without permission.

### **Expected Behaviour in the Classroom**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible 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 difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Each child is expected to:

- treat others with respect and kindness
- be punctual for school
- is expected to sign in at the front office if they are late (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class)
- to do all homework (both learning and written) and ensure it is done to the best of her ability
- complete her class work to the best of her ability and engage fully in all subjects and in all activities
- have all her school books, copies and equipment at all times
- be responsible for keeping her own working area tidy and assist others in maintaining a presentable classroom (age appropriate)
- turn take and raise her hand if she wishes to speak
- remain in her seat unless instructed otherwise by the class teacher
- remain in the classroom and only leave with the permission of the class teacher. Children are not permitted to re-enter their classroom after class is dismissed without the permission of a class teacher.
- speak politely. Answering back is not tolerated.
- have a healthy lunch each day. A fun size treat may be given on a Friday. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.
- eat her food in the yard before commencing play. Food waste is to be disposed in the designated bin in the yard. All other food waste should be brought home.
- to keep long hair tied up in the interest of hygiene **Expected Behaviour in the Yard**
- Food may be eaten in yard at break time and food waste should be placed in the designated bins. Pupils should stand and eat the food item at the centre doors in the yard before commencing play.

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- Each child is expected to remain within their designated areas and within the boundaries of the yard.
- Each child should adhere to the *Kind hands, Kind words, Kind feet* rule at all times.
- Children should report any incident to the teacher on yard and also to the class teacher.
- During the colder months, each child should wear her coat to the yard. Children are not permitted to return to the classroom for coats, skipping ropes etc.
- To avoid accidents, pupils must carry items of clothing taken off. Coats are not to be left on the ground in the yard.
- Skipping is allowed, however ropes are only to be used for skipping.
- Children who wish to use the toilet must seek the permission of the teacher on yard.
- Children who are feeling sick must tell the teacher on yard.
- Children who are injured should seek the teacher on yard and report all injuries to the teacher.

#### **4. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**

The standard of behaviour in Corpus Christi National School is excellent and it is recognised that the children are intrinsically well behaved. Promoting positive behaviour is the main aim of the Code of Behaviour and it is an essential prerequisite for effective learning. We acknowledge that children learn better in an ordered and positive environment where they are stimulated and engaged in learning. We recognise the importance of building self-esteem through acknowledging progress and effort, rewarding improvement and developing motivation.

At Corpus Christi, we acknowledge the supportive role that parents play in encouraging good behaviour at home and at school. We consider their support to be the cornerstone of an effective Code of Behaviour and fundamental to developing the core values of Courtesy, Respect, Honesty, Kindness and Responsibility. We recognise the role of our pupils in promoting positive behaviour by consistently following the Code of Behaviour and by role modelling good behaviour for others.

#### **Affirming Positive Behaviour**

At Corpus Christi National School, we practise a system of positive discipline where the emphasis is on recognising and affirming children who behave well. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline. Incentives are used as a planned intervention to promote and reward good behaviour.

The day to day excellence of school and classroom management enables most students to behave in ways that supports their own learning and development. Teachers and staff use a wide range of strategies for promoting good behaviour and for minimising misbehaviour at both school and class level:

We encourage our pupils to behave well by:

- praising and affirming their homework, classwork, behaviour and by writing commendations in diaries and copybooks
- displaying their work as much as possible, which provides opportunities for the principal and /or other colleagues to affirm good work and/or behaviour when visiting classrooms
- recognising participation, achievement and contribution across a wide range of areas such as behaviour, sport, art, music, drama and academics
- giving children responsibility in the school and involving them in the preparation and implementation of school and classroom rules

- giving children opportunities to discuss and compile classroom rules in line with the code of behaviour, so that they understand that they have an active role in adhering to it
- setting high expectations for student behaviour with clear and consistent standards
- creating a happy school atmosphere whereby parents, teachers and pupils support each other and interact positively together
- modelling the behaviour that is expected from students
- creating good school and classroom routines, and setting and implementing clear boundaries and rules for students
- monitoring student behaviour by recording individual incidents
- helping students acquire values of good behaviour through specific subjects such as SPHE, RE and drama
- utilising SEN resources and professional support services for students who require support putting in place appropriate supervisory management structures for overseeing school discipline

Part of the vision of Corpus Christi National School is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are not solely based on academic merit take in the holistic development of the child. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- a quiet word or gesture to show approval
- a comment in a pupil's exercise book
- a visit to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation
- a word of praise in front of a group or class
- a system of awards, merit marks or stickers
- delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- a mention to parent/guardian, written or verbal communication
- homework pass from the principal
- a word/ note/certificate of recognition from the principal

## **5. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

### **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. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

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### **Examples of minor misbehaviour**

- talking when teacher or another pupil is talking, interrupting the teacher, shouting out answers, talking over another pupil, talking out of turn
- pupil not listening to instructions, fiddling with stationary etc
- laughing/ sniggering/sneering at other children
- throwing objects, making noise, swinging on chairs
- getting out of seat or moving around the room without permission
- carelessness with books and stationery, scribbling/drawing on school books

### **Examples of serious misbehaviour**

- consistently interrupting/distracting others in class
- behaviour that is hurtful or threatening (including bullying-verbal, physical, cyber harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- being disrespectful to a member of staff
- threats or physical hurt to another person
- damage to property
- refusal to follow instructions of school staff
- using mobile phone in school
- theft from classmate/teacher

### **Examples of gross misbehaviour**

- assault on a teacher or pupil
- serious theft
- serious damage to property

### **Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour- Sanctions**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline 'the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined.' The purpose of sanctions is to promote positive behaviour and address and discourage certain behaviours. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour with due regard to age, needs and emotional development of the child.

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping students to:

- learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- recognise the effect of their actions and their behaviour on others
- understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences (in ways appropriate to their age and development)
- 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

Teachers will use their professional judgement and their knowledge of the child and the particular circumstances of the behaviour or incident in responding to unacceptable behaviour and in selecting the appropriate sanction. The sanction will be proportionate to the behaviour or incident in question. It may include:

- reasoning with pupil
- advising and alerting pupils to the consequences of inappropriate behaviour
- verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- confiscating disruptive items
- temporary separation from peers, friends within the class or wider school setting
- prescribing additional work e.g. completing a reflection sheet.
- loss of privilege
- detention during break
- communication with parents
- referral to principal
- principal communicating with parents
- suspension
- 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)

## **6.Suspension and Expulsion**

### **Context**

All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it would be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and expulsion are the options available to the Board of Management in these situations.

### **The Grounds for Suspension**

When deciding on a suspension the school considers that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, a range of appropriate student welfare and behavioural interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons as to why these have not worked. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

The decision to suspend a student is not taken lightly and requires serious grounds such as:

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- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education and/or welfare of other student/s and/or staff and on the administration and management of the school
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension

The following factors will be considered before a pupil is suspended:

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- the context of the behaviour
- the impact of the behaviour
- the interventions tried to date
- whether suspension is a proportionate response
- the possible impact of suspension

### **Authority to Suspend**

The Board of Management of the school has the authority to suspend a student. This authority is delegated in accordance with procedure by the Board to the Principal in the event that an immediate suspension of no longer than one day is warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal are authorized to impose a suspension, up to and including 3 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. This authority will be exercised by them having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the principles of procedural fairness. Longer-term suspensions can only be imposed by the Board of Management.

### **Procedures to be followed in respect of suspension**

When proposing to suspend a pupil the school authority will apply the principles of fair procedure. Where a preliminary assessment of an incident confirms serious/gross misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the following procedures will apply:

- A formal investigation will be conducted.
- The pupil and parent will be given details of the complaint and any other information and will be given an opportunity to give their side of the story and if necessary to ask questions about the evidence of the serious misbehaviour.

### **The period of suspension**

A student should not be suspended for a period exceeding 3 days. However, the Board may authorize the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to three days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The maximum period that may be imposed by the Board for any one suspension is 10 days unless the Board is considering expulsion.

### **Notification of suspension**

The Principal will notify the pupil and the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The notification will confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
- the right of appeal to either the Board of Management or the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science

**Grounds for removing a suspension**

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management/Patron decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

**Procedure for re-introduction of student**

Following 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.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

### **Records and reports**

Formal written records will be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all the interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

### **Report to the Board of Management**

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension and also to the National Education Welfare Board as required.

### **Report to TUSLA**

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the National Education Welfare Board reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21 (4)(a)).

## **Expulsion**

### **The Grounds for Expulsion**

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management decides to permanently exclude the student from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (Education Welfare Service TUSLA).

Before expelling a pupil, the Board of Management shall notify the local Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The step to expel student is very serious and will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

### **Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student**

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- the context of the behaviour
- the impact of the behaviour
- the interventions tried to date
- whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- the possible impact of expulsion



### **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

Fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 will be applied where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion. The procedural steps will include:

**Step 1: A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal:** In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal should:

- inform the pupil and her parents/guardians in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give parents and pupil every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed

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

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

- inform the parents/guardians and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents/guardians have records of:
  - the allegations against the student
  - the investigation
  - and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as given to the parents and/or guardians
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

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

- review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures
- undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case
- hold a hearing where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student
- allow the Principal and the parents/guardians to put their case in each other's presence
- allow each party to question the evidence of other party directly
- ensure that the Principal and parents/guardians are not present for the Board's deliberations

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

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board will:

- notify the Educational Welfare Officer (TUSLA) in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion
- inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process
- inform parents/guardians that the Board of Management is writing to inform the Educational Welfare Officer
- not expel the pupil before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1))

#### **Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer**

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

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

#### **Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel**

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel.

#### **Appeals**

A parent may appeal a decision of the Board of Management to expel a student to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science (Education Act, 1998 Section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student. All appeals must be made in writing.

## **Review of use of expulsion**

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

## **7. Scope**

The standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour will apply in any situation where the pupil, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

Where a pupil is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside the school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school and where there is a clear connection with the school that has a demonstrable impact on its work, the code of behaviour may apply. The Board of Management will examine individual cases as they arise and assess where the responsibility of the school lies.

## **8. Success Criteria**

The success of the code of behaviour depends on having a good plan for its implementation. The essential elements of an implementation plan are:

- communicating the code
- teaching pupils the behavioural skills they need
- identifying the educational and care needs of individual students
- securing parental support for the code
- monitoring behaviour in the school
- reviewing the code

## **Communicating the Code of Behaviour**

The Code of Behaviour will be communicated to parents by providing them with a copy of the code and/or by making the code available to them on-line on the school website. A copy of the code will be provided to all parents when they enrol their child in the school. The Principal will discuss the code with new parents at the annual induction meeting. Parents are expected to support the school's Code of Behaviour and to ensure that their children attending the school support it. Essential elements of the code are published in the Student's Journal (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class) each year and are available to students and parents.

### **Teaching the code and building student confidence and competence**

The school will define and teach the behaviours which it expects from the students in order to foster in them the skills to manage their own behaviour and to respond appropriately to the behaviour of others. This will include:

- explaining the code to all pupils at the beginning of each school year
- referring to the code in class on a regular basis and applying the values in class and throughout the school
- clarifying students' understanding of expected behaviours at appropriate times
- teaching and discussing appropriate and inappropriate behaviour with students as situations arise
- providing opportunities for students to learn and practice the rules
- using the social, personal and health education and religious education programmes to teach skills for responsible behaviour and relationships
- assisting students with special educational needs to understand and observe the code

### **Building relationships with parents**

Parental understanding and support for the implementation of the code of behaviour is strengthened through activities such as:

- the induction meeting for parents of Junior Infants which introduces them to the organisation and management of the school and its policies including the code of behaviour
- encouraging parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school
- alerting parents to concerns about a student's behaviour, so that ways of helping the student can be discussed and agreed
- having clear channels through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a student, and explore ways of helping the student
- providing information sessions through the Parents Association, such as talks or workshops on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development
- involving parents in reviewing and planning appropriate school policies, as part of school development planning

### **9. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school**

In co-operation with parents and guardians, we strive to help each pupil achieve her full potential and so we will promote a positive attitude towards good attendance and punctuality. The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, *“the procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.”* Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence. Please refer to the policy on Attendance for further information on:

- strategies to promote good attendance
- responding to poor attendance
- recording and reporting attendance

The school is legally obliged to notify the Education Welfare Services in TUSLA when a child is absent for more than 20 school days annually.

## **10. Reference to Other Policies**

- Child Safeguarding Policy    ○ Anti-bullying Policy    ○ SPHE Plan
- Statement of Strategy for Attendance
- Data Protection Policy    ○ Health & Safety
- Special Education and Inclusivity Policy    ○ Dignity at Work Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

## **11. Review**

The process of reviewing the Code of Behaviour is part of a continuous cycle arising from the use of the code in the school. It draws on a range of sources of information and evidence, including the experience and views of students, teachers and other staff and parents. It uses this information and analysis to plan ways to strengthen the operation of the code. The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed at least once in the term of each Board of Management.

This policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management in September 2023. It will be reviewed annually.

Signature: Niamh Greene    Signature: Aidan Savage    Date: 11/09/23

Niamh Greene

Aidan Savage

Principal

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date of Approval: January 2021

Date of review: 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023