



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Scoil Mhuire na nGael, Bay Estate, Dundalk.

Introductory Statement

The staff of Scoil Mhuire na nGael reviewed our Code of Behaviour and engaged in reflection and discussion. The policy was also reviewed by the Parents' Association and the Board of Management.

Rationale:

- This policy was reviewed because it is a priority area identified by staff.
- It is required under Circular 20/90 and Section 23 of the Education [Welfare] Act 2000
- The existing policy was due for review.
- To enable the Code of Behaviour to be circulated to the parent body.

Aims:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self- discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance 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 provide a safe place of work and learning.
- To ensure fairness for all.
- To provide a consistent set of expectations, rules and boundaries throughout the school.
- To provide a recognition of the variety of differences which exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all members of the school community are widely known and understood.
- To promote the conditions for learning and teaching, dignity and freedom from threat of violence for the staff and the students.

Ethos:

Scoil Mhuire na nGael is a Catholic school where mutual respect is promoted within the community. The dignity and value of each person is recognised. The school values and nurtures all members of the school community. It requires the co-operation of teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, parents, visitors to the school and the Board of Management. The Code of Behaviour reflects our Catholic ethos and our Christian values.

Roles and Responsibilities: The responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the partners in education i.e. B.O.M., Principal and teaching staff and the parents/guardians of the pupils attending Scoil Mhuire na nGael.

Responsibilities of B.O.M.

- Provide a comfortable and safe environment for pupils and staff
- Support the principal and staff in the implementation of this Code of Behaviour
- Arrange periodic review of the Code of Behaviour and ratification of the policy

Responsibilities of Principal

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner

Responsibilities of Teachers

- Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil and affirm good work and effort
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Record incidents of serious misbehaviour on Aladdin and record serious incidents on recording template (Appendix 1). All Appendix 1 forms to be stored on the child's file on Aladdin.
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern

Standards of behaviour expected of pupils within the school

- Attend school regularly. Absences should be absolutely necessary.
- Arrive on time. The school day commences at 8.50am and finishes at 1.30pm for infants and 2.30pm for all other classes.
- Do not leave the school without permission.
- Respect all school property
- Wear the school uniform
- Show respect for all in the school community
- Avoid name calling and use of inappropriate language

- Listen to messages given and do as requested
- Participate in school activities
- Be willing to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Keep the school tidy and litter free.
- Pupils are permitted to take mobile phones to school. However these must remain switched off on school property. (Ref: Mobile Phone Policy). No other electronic devices may be brought to school.
- Bullying or being party to bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances. (Ref: Anti Bullying Policy)

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

The school depends on parents/guardians to support good behaviour and discipline.

- Ensure the school has up to date contact information (parents' phone numbers & e mail addresses and emergency contact names and phone numbers)
- Advise the school if unable to accept phone calls during the school day (8.30am – 3pm) and nominate another person to accept phone calls on your behalf in this event.
- Ensure your child attends school regularly and on time.
- Where applicable, collect your child promptly at the end of the school day.
- Following all absences complete and sign the appropriate record of absence template in the homework journal (1st – 6th classes). Absences of more than 20 days will **automatically** be reported to the Tusla (Child & Family Agency). Ref: School Attendance Policy
- Children who are required to leave the school before the official school times must be collected in the school by a parent/guardian and must be signed out/signed in by a parent/guardian when returning to school. The signing facility is available at the school office.
- Share information with the school in relation to any circumstance which may affect your child's progress/behaviour (family situation, bereavement). This information will be maintained on your child's file on Aladdin.
- Check your child has all their needs for class i.e. books, stationery etc. Children in 3rd – 6th classes attend swimming lessons in Aura Leisure Centre over a 5 week period. Ensure your child has his/her swimming gear each week.
- Be aware that many of our children have food allergies and **nuts or foods containing nuts should not be included in your child's lunch.**
The class teacher will not distribute party bags or holidays treats from parents in keeping with this health & safety concern for all our pupils.
- Attend the parent teacher meeting to discuss your child's progress.
- Provide children with positive models of behaviour
- Children need boundaries and rules about behaviour. Parents should talk to their child about school rules. They help make the school a safe place where everyone can learn and nobody feels left out or threatened.

- Be interested in, support and encourage your child's school work.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where your child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Ensure an ordered structured day for your child with regular meal times and bed times
- Any deliberate damage to property by a pupil must be paid for by the parent.
- Behave in a respectful manner

Principles:

The emphasis in Scoil Mhuire na nGael is on the positive. We will seek at all times to promote positive and constructive behaviour and discourage unacceptable and undesirable behaviour. The Code places a greater emphasis on rewards rather than on sanctions. Good behaviour will be praised and rewarded. Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. The Code will promote the acquisition of self-discipline as an ideal. Positive behaviour will be noted and acknowledged. We will try to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively undistruptive environment. There are times however when it may be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order and to discourage unacceptable behaviour.

Our "SUPER" Rules:

- SAFETY – We take care in all we do to ensure our own safety and the safety of others.
- UNIFORM – We wear our school uniform with pride. Tracksuits are worn on designated P.E. days.
- PUNCTUALITY/PROPERTY- We come to school on time every day. We take care of our own personal property and of school property.
- EFFORT – We try our best at everything we do.
- RESPECT – We respect ourselves and everyone in our school community.

Behaviour has been subdivided into these main areas

- General school behaviour
- Positive reinforcement
- Classroom practice
- Computer room
- Halla
- Library
- Lunch Time
- Yard at play times
- School outings
- Morning pre-school assembly

Positive Reinforcement:

- We will encourage and praise. “Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí”
- Emphasise good behaviour and hope for a ripple effect
- Praise good behaviour
- Golden time play
- Reward system for good behaviour – stars, stickers, homework pass, class dojo etc.
- Report good behaviour to parents
- Acknowledgement of good behaviours at assembly.
- Pupil of the Week prizes

Classroom Practice:

- Respect each person in the class.
- Be kind and helpful to others.
- Look out for others, try to be inclusive and work as a team.
- Good manners at all times
- Always say ‘sorry’ if you should
- Look and listen
- Wait your turn to speak as in ‘lámha suas’
- Keep classroom clean and tidy
- Enter and leave the classroom quietly
- Show respect when a visitor is in the classroom
- What happens in class is dealt with in class with class teacher.

Computer Room:

- No food and drink in the computer room
- Chairs should be pushed in neatly
- Headphones should be put in their proper place
- Listen carefully
- *School Internet Usage Policy* applies at all times when children are using ICT.

Hall Activities:

- Walk quietly to and from the hall
- Follow teacher's instructions.
- Listen carefully
- No use of equipment without permission
- Follow the safety rules
- Wait your turn when using P.E. equipment
- "Freeze" when the whistle blows
- All sports equipment to be stored away neatly and safely after usage

Library

- Walk quietly to and from the library
- Follow teacher's instructions
- All books to be put back neatly and in the proper section of the library.

Lunch Times:

- Take no food wrappers to the yard
- Where possible, all uneaten lunches should go home for recycling. This practice will also guide/ inform parents on suitable content and choice of lunch for their child.

Yards at Recreation Times:

- **Rough play is not allowed.**
- **Name calling and use of inappropriate language is forbidden.**
- Pupils walk to and from the yard/field
- Pupils may not re-enter the school or classroom without the permission of the teacher on duty
- Pupils "freeze" when the first bell rings and walk to their assigned line when the second bell rings
- At play times the school yards are divided into separate sections for the infants/1st & 2nd classes and for 3rd and 4th classes / 5th and 6th classes. The yard is divided by a coloured line and children from each section must

stay within their allotted area. On occasions classes may be permitted to play in the field under teacher supervision.

- Pupils who receive injuries at school will receive first aid. Parents will be contacted in the event of a serious injury.
- Children should report any concerns to the teacher on duty so issues can be resolved without delay.

School Outings:

Pupils are required to

- Listen carefully to all instructions.
- Represent the school well.
- Adhere to bus rules
 1. Board one at a time
 2. Stay seated while bus in motion and wear seat belt
 3. No messing on the bus
 4. Leave the bus as directed by the teacher
 5. Alight the bus one at a time – no jumping from the bus
 6. Line up in the designated area
 7. Respect all adults on the bus
 8. Respect the property of the bus company
- The rules of the venue and their safety guidelines must be strictly obeyed.
- If “Buddy System” is in use pupils must stay with the assigned “Buddy”.
- School ***Policies on Tours and Mobile Phones*** will apply

Morning Pre -School Assembly:

- Pupils from senior infants to 6th classes assemble in their class lines in the junior yard while pupils from the ‘Blue Corridor’ are supervised in the hall from 8.40am (Ref: Supervision Policy)
- Pupils must obey the instructions of the teacher or supervisor.
- On wet mornings pupils from the ‘Blue Corridor’ are supervised in the hall. All other classes are accommodated in the corridor nearest their classroom and supervised by assigned staff.

Misbehaviour is seen to be made up of

- Minor misdemeanours
- Serious misdemeanours
- Gross misdemeanours

Minor misdemeanours – the following are examples but the list is not exhaustive

Continuous talking in class,
Inattention,
Pushing jostling of others,
Writing and passing notes,
Name calling,
Use of rude language (oral or written)
Messing in toilets
Rough play

Sanctions for Minor Misdemeanours

Gestured warning – look/whisper
Verbal warning – advice given
Separation from peers
Extra written work given (Parents may be requested to sign same)

Serious misdemeanours

The following are examples but the list is not exhaustive. All such behaviours will be recorded by the class teacher or the teacher on yard duty in the School Yard book or on Aladdin.

Repeated minor misdemeanours
Rough play causing injury
Damaging property
Spitting/biting
Stealing another's property
Racist remarks
Inappropriate language used in a threatening, harassing or abusive manner
Compromising another's personal dignity

*Leaving the school grounds without permission (age appropriate)

****Should a pupil leave the school grounds without permission parents will be contacted immediately. Gardaí may also be informed.***

Gross misdemeanours

The following are examples but the list is not exhaustive.

Five serious misdemeanours

Substance abuse

Endangering pupils or staff

Threatening behaviour

Uncontrolled behaviour

Bullying

In dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers have regard to the school's Anti-Bullying policy which was drawn up in accordance with the Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools (2013)

Sanctions

- (a) If a pupil's name is recorded on 3 occasions for serious misdemeanours in the class or yard behaviour book/Aladdin they must attend supervised detention during lunch break on Thursday. Parents will be advised in advance if pupil attending detention.
- (b) If pupil records 4 serious misdemeanours the parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Deputy Principal to discuss the pupil's behaviour. The pupil will be required to attend the next detention session. Parents will be advised the pupil will be suspended in the event of a further serious misdemeanour.
- (c) If pupil has recorded 5 serious misbehaviours over a period of time, the parents have visited the school to discuss the pupil's behaviour, then suspension will be imposed.
- (d) Where a pupil has presented with ongoing misbehaviours and parents have been informed, the school reserves the right to withdraw the pupil from school activities (visiting performers/artists etc.) and from out of school events (trips, school tours, sports events etc.)
- (e) Where the school has evidence that a pupil posted negative comments about another pupil or their family members on social media, the school reserves the right to withdraw the pupil from school activities (visiting performers/artists) and also from out of school events (trips, school tours, sports events etc.)

Grounds for Suspension

A student can be suspended if any of the following is breached:

- a. The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- b. The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- c. The student is responsible for injury to person(s) during school hours.
- d. The student is responsible for serious damage to school property.

Procedures for Suspension

Following an investigation of the incident and where suspension is being considered the parents/guardians will be contacted by the Principal and requested to attend a meeting where they have

- The right to be heard
 - The right to know what alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
 - The right to know how issue is decided
 - The right to respond
 - The right to be heard by the Board of Management
 - The right to ask questions
- Written notification of all suspensions will be sent by registered post to parents, outlining the period of suspension, the reason for suspension, arrangements for returning to school including any commitments to be entered into by the pupils and the parents, and the right of appeal to the B.O.M. /Secretary General of the Dept. of Education. A copy of this letter will be kept on the pupil's file.
 - Following the period of suspension the pupil and his/her parent/guardian will meet with the Principal and the pupil will be reintegrated into the class. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
 - Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal for reasons of safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation is conducted to establish the case for imposition of the suspension. A formal investigation under the direction of the Principal will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. Parents are notified immediately and asked to collect the student from the school.
 - A pupil may be suspended for up to three school days by the school principal. This authority has been formally delegated to the Principal in writing by the B.O.M

- The principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the B.O.M. may suspend a pupil for up to and including five school days, in circumstances where a meeting of the B.O.M. cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- The B.O.M. may suspend a pupil for a period exceeding five school days but would normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension.
- The B.O.M. will inform Túsla (Child & Family Agency) when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds ten school days.
- Should a suspension bring the number of days for which a student has been suspended in a current school year to twenty school days or more, this suspension would be subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of The Rules of National Schools

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 parents/guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the B.O.M. 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 Deputy Principal, in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson B.O.M. and the principal.

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It helps our pupils to develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help pupils accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

Prevention Strategies & Additional Supports

Pupils with special needs may require assistance in understanding and respecting certain rules. Additional inputs and interventions may also be required to help some pupils manage their behaviour and to prevent them failing educationally. Such interventions could include

- Referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the pupil
- Individual Behaviour Support Plans may be devised in consultation with parents/guardians, the school's SEN co-ordinator, class teacher, support teachers, SNA, and the pupil (age appropriate). Professional assessments where available may inform and shape the plan.

Specialised Supports

A small minority of pupils may exhibit particularly challenging behaviour. The school, in co-operation with the pupil's parents/guardians will seek to avail of any services that may assist in responding to the pupil's needs. These services could include the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), play therapists, Rainbows, and other relevant professional counselling services.

Expulsion

- The authority to expel a student is the responsibility of the ***Board of Management*** of Scoil Mhuire na nGael.
- Grounds for expulsion:
 - a. Behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching profession.
 - b. The continued presence of the pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
 - c. Pupil is responsible for assault of person(s) causing serious injury.

- **Automatic/Expulsion for first offence:**

The following prescribed behaviours carry an automatic expulsion in Scoil Mhuire na nGael

- a. Sexual Assault
- b. Supplying illegal substances to others on school premises.
- c. Actual violence or physical assault
- d. A serious threat of violence against another pupil or a member of staff.

Procedures for Expulsion

1. A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal. To ensure impartiality and to afford the pupil fair procedures the Principal will not carry out the investigation if he/she is a victim or a witness to an assault. The B.O.M. will appoint a designated person to conduct the investigation in this instance.
2. Principal/Person investigating the incident recommends to B.O.M. to consider expulsion of pupil. The B.O.M. may request a pupil to remain out of school where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the pupil during this time will disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils and staff.
3. B.O.M. considers the recommendation and parents/guardians are informed that B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion. Parents/guardians will receive written records of the allegation against the pupil, the investigation that has been carried out and the grounds on which the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion. The B.O.M. will receive the same comprehensive reports as are given to the parents. The parents/guardians and the Principal/person investigating the incident are invited to a hearing and advised they can make both oral and written submissions to the B.O.M. Each party may question the evidence of the other party directly. When the presentation to the B.O.M. has been completed, both parties leave the B.O.M. meeting to allow the B.O.M. deliberate on the facts.
4. Where the B.O.M. having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Chairperson B.O.M. completes a "Notice of Intention to Expel a Student" form and sends it to the Educational Welfare Officer.
5. The B.O.M. informs the parents/guardians in writing by registered letter about its conclusions and advises them of the next step in the process. The parents/guardians should be advised that the B.O.M. has informed the Education Welfare Officer and that the expulsion does not take effect until twenty days has elapsed from the date the EWO receives this written notification. The B.O.M. may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this time if there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or present a threat to the safety of other students and staff.
6. The Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations to discuss alternative interventions that may avoid expulsion and to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education.
7. When the twenty days has elapsed and where the B.O.M. remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the B.O.M. formally advises the parent by registered post of their decision to expel the pupil. Parents will be informed of their right to appeal and be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

8. Chairperson B.O.M. will complete and forward a “Confirmation of Expulsion of a Student” form to the EWO.
9. Parents/Guardians may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education.

Absences from School:

In accordance with The Education Act 2000 the school maintains a record of attendance or non-attendance for each school day for each child registered at the school. This is easily accessible on the school’s management system (Aladdin). When a child in 1st – 6th class is absent the parent should record the number of days absent together with the reason for absence in the child’s homework notebook. The class teacher will input this information into Aladdin, the school’s management system.

An automated text message is generated by Aladdin and issues to parents when a child has been absent for 15 /20/25/30.... days in a current school year. Parents are informed at Open Night and by school newsletter about the school’s obligation to report where necessary to Tusla (Child & Family Agency)

The Education Welfare Officer must be informed if

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended for 6 school days or more in any school year
- A child has missed more than 20 days in a school year

Tusla is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through an annual report.

Acceptance of this policy is a condition of enrolment of this school and thereafter parents are required to comply with any further amendments in the event of a review of the code.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the B.O.M. on 9th October, 2019 and will be effective from this date.

Signed: Sr Maighread Ní Ghallchóbhair
(for and on behalf of the Board of Management)