



Code of Behaviour

Code of behaviour Policy of Tramore Educate Together National School

Introduction:

This policy was revised during the school year 2016/2017. This revised policy was written following consultation with staff, pupils, parents and the board of management.

Rationale:

It is necessary to devise a Code of Behaviour for the following reasons:

- To ensure a positive climate for learning in the school.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools 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:
 - a. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
 - b. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
 - c. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
 - d. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
 - e. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school:

The Code of Behaviour recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of the school. Tramore ETNS is based on four key principles: child-centred, co-educational, democratic, and multi-denominational. The Code attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which potential is nurtured through the co-operation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

In accordance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 2005, the Board of Management will conduct their business, as far as reasonably practicable, in ways that prevent improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare of employees at work or the health and safety of pupils, parents or visitors at risk. Our aim is to ensure that the right of each child to education is upheld and maintained. The need for respect and good behaviour is emphasised. Pupils and adults in the school community are expected to accept the rules in a spirit of goodwill and co-operation. Parental support is an integral part in the implementation of our code of behaviour. Respect and order are its key components.

Aims:

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To allow the efficient operation of the school so children will feel secure and can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, care and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences

- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To produce responsible students that will learn from the environment that they see around them.

Content of policy:

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 student attending the school”.

The standards of behaviour that the school wishes to promote/expects from the pupils are as follows:

- Pupils should try their best in all areas of school life
- Pupils are expected to show respect for themselves, for other people, for the school property and their property.
- Pupils are expected to do as the teacher asks immediately.
- Pupils are expected to be kind and helpful to all.
- Pupils are expected to behave well in class so that all pupils can learn.

These standards are reflected in our Golden Rules

Do listen.

Do be safe.

Do be kind to yourself and others.

Do try your best and allow others to try their best.

Do look after property.

Tramore ETNS recognises that there exist factors influencing children’s behaviour that may need to be considered and accommodated. The school will endeavour to do this in a discrete manner in which each child’s potential for good behaviour is emphasised.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour and that the principal ‘may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child’.

2. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH IN PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

A whole school approach to promotion of positive behaviour is of vital importance in Tramore ETNS. ‘A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school’ (Circular 20/90).

Staff

In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on

the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour. 'It is important that the policy is accepted by all staff.' (Circular 20/90).

- All staff are aware of and agree to promote the ethos of the school, as well as implementing the Code of Behaviour in line with the ethos.
- This approach is maintained and improved from year to year. Issues or proposed amendments are addressed at staff meetings.
- The "Incredible Years" classroom management training programme attended by the principal in 2016 has informed some of our policy amendments
- All staff are consulted on and aware of this code of behaviour. The code of behaviour is communicated to new and temporary staff by being made available to them at an access point in the office.
- The code of behaviour caters for all children, including those who may present behavioural difficulties arising from their special education needs. Specific strategies are used to cater for these children e.g. an IEP with behavioural targets visual prompts or pictures; practise observing the rules, with feedback on their progress.

The school's SPHE curriculum, as well as the *Learn Together* Curriculum, is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

- These curricula are managed and monitored through regular review of the relevant plans/policies at staff meetings.
- The school promotes a sense of openness and inclusion amongst staff members and new teachers are encouraged to approach longer-serving staff members for support and guidance. New teachers are informed and supported by having open access to plans/policies.
- There are many activities scheduled by staff to develop the skills of the Code/SPHE and *Learn Together* Curriculum in children e.g. Circle Time, positive comments box etc.

Board of Management

'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school' (Circular 20/90). The following outlines the Board's role in relation to Tramore ETNS:

- The Board of Management is consulted in reviewing of the Code of Behaviour. It is circulated to the Board for review. Comments are encouraged and welcomed. Appropriate amendments are agreed upon and made prior to ratification by the Board.
- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis. The Board organises regular auditing and reviewing of the Code of Behaviour.
- The Board of Management approves and facilitates training e.g. Incredible Years training provided by NEPS
- The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour e.g. supporting the provision of opportunities for staff development.
- The Board of Management deals with serious breaches of behaviour through the procedures in place.

- The Board has responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies. The Board should play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities. (NEWB. - Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools).
- The Board should make sure that all the members of the school community have the opportunity to be involved in work on the Code of Behaviour. (NEWB. - Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools).

Parents

'Evidence [*indicates*] that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.'

'Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.' (Circular 20/90).

- Co-operation between staff and parents is encouraged. Joint work between parents and staff in the development of the code of behaviour is hoped to:
 - i. give parents insight into what teachers need in order to be able to teach effectively
 - ii. equip parents to reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school
 - iii. help parents and staff to have a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work
 - iv. help to ensure that parents and staff give consistent messages to students about how to treat others.
- Parents will be directly involved in the development of this policy and its audit, review and implementation e.g. through the representative committee including members of the board of management, parents and teaching staff to review the code of behaviour.
- Parents of newly enrolled children are informed about the Code and their part in supporting it by providing them with a copy of the Code of Behaviour on acceptance of enrolment. Junior Infant parents are reminded of the main points of the policy at the induction meeting.
- Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour through the following ways:
 - Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
 - Parents encourage their child to do their best and take responsibility for their work
 - Parents ensure their children attend school and are on time
 - Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
 - Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
 - Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
 - Parents inform the teacher of any concerns they have regarding their child.

Pupils

- Our Golden Rules were written following consultation with the children. Children were asked to consider:
 - What should children do.....
 - How can teachers help.....
 How can parents help.... to make our school a place where everyone:

- ❖ **Feels safe**
- ❖ **Can learn**
- ❖ **Belongs and is respected**
- ❖ **and respects others.**

- Pupils play a fundamental role in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour through a variety of methods including:
 - Drafting rules for the classroom / Class Contracts
 - Buddy systems
- Pupils will be consulted in the review of the Code of Behaviour through the Student Council when it is established.

3. POSITIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers, INTO 2004: 5).

The following positive strategies are used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour. It is addressed in relation to the classroom setting, the playground and the general school environs.

Classroom

The following positive strategies are used by staff to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom:

- Class Contract i.e. behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning
- Pupils engage in discussion about our Golden Rules and the class rules and are encouraged to focus on the positive/good behaviour through the medium of entitlements and responsibilities e.g. 'At school, other people respect my property.' 'At school I respect other people's property.'
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- Teachers model the behaviours encouraged in the Class Contract and the Code of Behaviour in an effort to lead by example.
- Implementation of a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation – transition routines, visual timetables, rewards such as Ipad time, Student of the Week, Golden Time.
- Teachers use the "Discipline Hierarchies for Nondisruptive and Disruptive Behaviour" as set out in The Incredible Years Programme. "Always choose the lowest, least intrusive first." See Appendix IV.
- Timetabling SPHE, Circle Time and Learn Together as set out in the Curricular Guidelines.

Playground

The following positive strategies are implemented by staff to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour:

- Playground rules emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted. Staff are made aware of new issues at staff meetings / as they arise. Children are made aware of changes through their class teacher. Pupils are involved in the creation of

these rules through discussion with their class teacher, whose responsibility it is to communicate these opinions at a staff meeting. Pupils can also relate their thoughts through the Student Council when it is established. Rules of the playground include:

- Follow directions of the person in charge
 - Enter and leave your classroom in a quiet and orderly fashion
 - Walk quietly and with care in the corridors
 - Play in the permitted areas
 - Play in a gentle and friendly manner
 - Cease play when signalled to do so
- Arrangements for supervision in the playground are done on a rota basis, using the guidelines set out in Appendix 47 of the Management Board Members Handbook.
 - If there is a need to supervise more closely the behaviour of certain age groups, certain areas of the playground, certain individual pupils, this is organised at staff meetings.
 - All children at play should be visible at all times.
 - All attempts are made to organise activities in ways that will minimise misbehaviour and encourage positive behaviour.
 - Teaching playground games to children, adapted to suit different class levels.
 - Arrangements for wet days: On wet days, children will remain in the classrooms for break-time under the supervision of the teacher on duty. Books, colouring or suitable games i.e. board games, jigsaws etc. will be provided.
 - Children are led to the playground by their class teacher and from the playground by supervising teacher/class teacher.
 - Children who leave the playground to use the toilets must ask the permission of the teacher on duty prior to going.
 - In the event of incidents of misbehaviour, children may be asked to take time out to calm down. The incident may be reported to the class teacher. Incidences of serious misbehaviour are noted in the incident book. This may result in the withdrawal of privileges and/or notification of parents/guardians.
 - Supervised time out to “calm your body down” will be allocated to pupils for aggressive behaviour e.g.:
 - Deliberately hurting and causing injury to another child
 - Continually disrupting and spoiling playtime for other children
 - Unsafe and dangerous play

Other areas in the school

- Positive strategies are used by staff to implement and to prevent behavioural problems in corridors, halls, toilets etc. e.g. praising good behaviour, providing an appropriate reward, notifying the child’s teacher of good behaviour etc.
- Rules/expectations are formulated with the help of the children. Children are regularly reminded of the rules, particularly at the start of the year and at the start of subsequent terms.
- All staff can contribute to promotion of positive behaviour around the school through encouraging, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour when it is encountered.

4. REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- The emphasis is on rewards to reinforce good behaviour, rather than on failures. It is regarded in Tramore ETNS that rewards have a motivational role, helping children to see that good behaviour is valued.
- The most common reward is praise, informal and formal, public and private, to individuals and groups. Good behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged in the school by all

staff through praise. Incidences of exceptional good behaviour are brought to the attention of the principal for acknowledgement and praise.

- All children that keep the Golden Rules will be rewarded with “Golden Time”. This is a 30 minute slot (usually on a Friday morning/afternoon), where pupils can individually decide on an activity they would like to do.
- Rewards may vary from class to class, depending on the age and maturity of the children. These may include stickers, stamps, certificates, prizes, no homework, reward activities e.g. extra computer time.
- ‘Good news’ is communicated to parents verbally, through notes and certificates. Likewise, it is communicated to staff and the principal.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

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’.

- Teachers use the “Discipline Hierarchies for Nondisruptive and Disruptive Behaviour” as set out in The Incredible Years Programme. “Always choose the lowest, least intrusive first.”
- The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.
- Examples of minor misdemeanours include: homework undone, pushing, teasing etc. (This is not an exhaustive list)
- Examples of serious misdemeanours include: persistent bullying behaviour, vandalism of school property etc. (This is not an exhaustive list)
- Examples of gross misdemeanours include: serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff, actual violence or assault, supplying or using illegal drugs etc. (This is not an exhaustive list)
- The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:
 1. helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
 2. helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
 3. helping pupils (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
 4. helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
(NEWB. - Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools)
- A sanction should be used in a respectful way that helps pupils to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. In particular, a sanction should:
 - a. defuse and not escalate a situation
 - b. preserve the dignity of all the parties
 - c. be applied in a fair and consistent way
 - d. be timely.
(NEWB. - Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools)
- The following menu of strategies may be useful in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour. It would be essential that staff discuss what each of these mean for their school context and when and how they may be applied: (Circular 20/90)
 - i. Reasoning with the pupil
 - ii. Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
 - iii. Loss of Golden Time (5 minute increments)
 - iv. Loss of playtime
 - v. Prescribing additional work

- vi. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
 - vii. Referral to Principal Teacher
 - viii. Communication with parents
 - ix. Staying after school
 - x. Suspension (See Section 5 on Suspension)
 - xi. Expulsion (See Section 5 on Expulsion)
- Sanctions will be applied in the following sequence:
 1. Reasoning with the pupil/s including advice on how to behave/improve.
 2. Oral reprimand which may be followed by sanctions such as:
 - Alternative or extra work
 - Loss of Golden Time
 - Temporary separation from friends/peers
 - Loss of playtime
 3. In the case of continuous misbehaviour or in the case of a single incident of a serious nature, the following action/s may be taken:
 - Referral to the Principal
 - Contact with parents/guardians (verbal or in writing)
 - Where a single incident is deemed to be of a very serious nature or where a pupil is persistently in breach of the Code of Behaviour and the above procedures have been followed, the case may, at the discretion of the Principal, be referred to the Board of Management.

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

'Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort.' (Circular 20/90).

- Parents are encouraged from the time of registration onwards to share information about anything that might affect a pupil's behaviour in school.
- In return, parents are approached (preferably) in person, by phone or in writing if a teacher/principal recognises areas of concern in a child's behaviour.
- Early warning systems alert parents to concerns about a pupil's behaviour, so that ways of helping the student can be discussed and agreed.
- When parents are invited to the school, every effort is made to put them at their ease in order to maximise a co-operative approach. Those present at the meeting with the parents may include principal and the teacher involved. The child may be present for part of or all of the meeting (if requested by the teacher).
- Parents are always encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns. Parents may approach a teacher informally or to request a formal meeting. Following this, parents may arrange a formal meeting with the Principal. Parents may also communicate in writing to the teacher/Principal/Board of Management.
- Information is offered through the Parent Association, such as talks or workshops, on behavioural matters and aspects of child development.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

- Strategies used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems:
 - Children who are emotionally disturbed are referred for psychological assessment.
 - When concerns are raised and throughout the child's schooling, the assistance of the Special Educational Needs Organiser is sought. Appropriate support is also sought from services available such as the Health Service Executive, NEPS etc.
- Specific strategies are used in the school:

- A care team is made up of all relevant school staff for an individual child. It may include class teacher, Resource Teacher (RT), Learning Support Teacher (LST), SNAs, Principal etc. Meetings are held to discuss the promotion of an individual's positive behaviour and minimise/eradicate their negative behaviour.
- If necessary, external SEN personnel may be invited to provide their professional opinion/advice.
- Professional development in this area is encouraged amongst all staff e.g. SESS, Colleges of Education, ICEP (ProfExcel) courses, Education Centres, etc.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school will contact the parents immediately. The school may request temporary exclusion while consultation with SENO and/or Education Welfare Officer takes place about appropriate resourcing, facilities etc.

5. SUSPENSION / EXPULSION PROCEDURES

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a Code of Behaviour shall specify 'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned' and 'the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.' (Sections 23(2) c, d)

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, international Conventions and case law. Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- the right to be heard
- the right to impartiality

Suspension

The Principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer, by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days (Sections 21[4] a). Circular 20/90 states that 'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated'. *Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern* (NEWB. - Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools).

The school follows the guidelines set out in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' as set out by NEWB in relation to suspension and expulsion.

- The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:
 - the pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
 - the pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
 - the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Factors to be considered prior to suspension are set out on page 72 of NEWB's 'Developing a Code Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'. Please find a copy of this attached to the document.

- Suspension should:
 - enable the school to set behavioural goals with the pupil and their parents
 - give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
 - impress on a pupil and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.
- Forms of suspension:

- *Immediate suspension* - In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider this to be necessary where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.
- *'Automatic' suspension* - A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and pupils, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.
- *Rolling suspension* - A pupil should not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:
 - they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension **and**
 - fair procedures are observed in full **and**
 - the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil.
- *Informal or Unacknowledged suspension* - Exclusion of a pupil for part of the school day, as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a child from school, as a sanction, is a suspension. Any exclusion imposed by the school is a suspension, and should follow the Guidelines relating to suspension.
- *Open-ended suspension* - Pupils should not be suspended for an indefinite period. Any such suspension would be regarded as a de-facto expulsion and would be treated as such under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:
 - inform the pupil and their parents about the complaint
 - give parents and student an opportunity to respond.
- **Procedures in relation to immediate suspension:**
 - Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended.
 - In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the pupil. Under no circumstances should a pupil be sent home from school without first notifying parents
- The period of suspension:
 - A pupil should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.
 - If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.
 - However, the Board of Management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.
 - The Board of Management places a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. The Board should formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where

the suspension would bring the number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

- These provisions enable school authorities to give the pupil a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures.
- Where a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days, the National Education Welfare Board will be notified using the standard form.
- Written notification
The Principal should notify the parents and the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:
 - the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
 - the reasons for the suspension
 - any study programme to be followed
 - the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
 - the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
 - the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, section 29).The letter should be clear and easy to understand.
- The Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the pupil to behave well when the pupil returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this. Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management 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.
- A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. All efforts will be made to re-integrate the child successfully. The child is given the opportunity and support for a fresh start / clean slate.

Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5))

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour
(NEWB. - Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools).

- Expulsion of a pupil is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:
 - meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour

- making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).
- A proposal to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:
 - the pupil's behaviour 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 safety
 - the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Forms of expulsion:
 - *'Automatic' expulsion* – The Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and pupils, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.
 - *Expulsion for a first offence* - There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:
 - ❖ a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
 - ❖ actual violence or physical assault
 - ❖ supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Factors to be considered prior to expulsion are set out on page 82 of NEWB's 'Developing a Code Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'. Please find a copy of this attached to the document.
- Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:
 1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
 2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
 3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
 4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
 5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
 6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, the school will advise parents of this right of appeal and the associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or pupil (See Circular 22/02).

- Parents/guardians are informed in writing by the Chairman of the BOM of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion following the decision being made
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept of Education and Science (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

6. KEEPING RECORDS

A standardised record system will allow the school to track an individual pupil's behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the pupil to deal with serious and gross misbehaviour should also be recorded, including contact with parents or referral to other agencies. Positive responses by a pupil, and evidence of changed behaviour, should be recorded, as should any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed. Pupils should be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record.

Records should be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. The eight rules of data protection apply to personal records kept in school:

1. Obtain and process information fairly.
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes.
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes.
4. Keep it safe and secure.
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date.
6. Ensure it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes.
8. Give a copy of their personal data to an individual on request.

Class level

- Every teacher is expected to maintain up-to-date records of a child's behaviour. Records are kept in the child's individual file/teacher's book.
- Serious misbehaviour is reported to the principal as soon as possible.
- The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour. There is a reasonably consistent understanding of what constitutes excellent – poor behaviour among the staff.
- Parents should be kept up to date during the year regarding behaviour issues.

Playground

- Supervising staff keep a record of misbehaviour on a teacher's 'Incidents book'. Class teachers and the principal are informed verbally.
- In an effort to encourage consistency in the application and interpretation of the rules, pupils will be reminded of the rules in class.

School records

- Factual reports of incidents; communication between school and home, with outside agencies, Board of Management; etc. will all be kept by the schools.
- Documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29 will be kept.
- Copies of the children's school reports, psychological reports, occupational therapy reports etc. will all be stored in the child's file.

7. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION OF PUPIL ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

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/guardians must notify the school of a pupil’s absence and the reason for this absence.

- The following strategies that are used to encourage school attendance:
 - Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
 - System for acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance
 - Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
 - Adapting the class/ school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and be on time.
 - Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- It is of great importance that parents/guardians let the school know of their child’s absence for any reason.
- The school should be informed when the pupil returns to school, except in cases of a planned prolonged absence where parents/guardians should inform the school prior to the absence.
- Parents/guardians should inform the class teacher of the absence.
- Parents/guardians should send in a note informing teachers of their child’s absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes should be signed and dated. These notes should be kept for the duration of the school year.
- The school may contact parents/guardians informally by phone in the case of an extended absence.
- The school will notify parents/guardians in writing when absences of their child amounts to more than 15 days.
- The school is legally obliged to inform the National Education Welfare Board in the event of a total number of days absent amount to 20 days or more. The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board.

8. REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES

The following plans/policies will also have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour:

- SPHE
- Learn Together
- Admissions & Participation
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- Critical Incident Management
- Anti-bullying
- Record-keeping and data protection
- Parental Involvement

Success Criteria:

Practical indicators of the success of the policy:

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- *What role has the Board of Management to play?* The Board of Management ratifies the policy. It also reviews all amendments and ratifies when appropriate. It supports staff,

pupils, parents and the school community in their efforts to implement the strategies set out in the Code of Behaviour.

- *Who are the people who have responsibility for the implementation of this policy?* The school community i.e. children, staff, parents, Board members are all responsible for the positive implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- *Who will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy?* The school staff in conjunction with the Principal and school community.
- *What role will the principal, teachers and SNAs play?* The Principal, teachers and SNAs will implement the Code of Behaviour, report back on positive aspects of the Code and make recommendations for its improvement.
- *What role have pupils to play?* The children are vital to constructive implementation of the Code of Behaviour. They will be encouraged to report back on positive aspects of the Code and make recommendations for its improvement in conjunction with their class teacher and through the Student Council when it is established.
- *What role have parents/guardians to play?* The successful implementation of the Code of Behaviour is dependent on the support of parents/guardians. They are always encouraged to review the policy, report back on positive aspects of the Code of Behaviour and make recommendations for its improvement.

Ratification and Review

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix I: Review of existing policy/practice

'The ethos or climate of a school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. This will involve a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents.' Circular 20/90.

- Is there an existing code of behaviour in place?
- Were all teachers involved in the formulation of this policy? Were other staff involved?
- Had pupils an input?
- Was there appropriate consultation with and involvement of parents in formulating this policy?
- What was the role of the Board of Management in preparing this code of behaviour as required by the Education Welfare Act 2000?
- What is working well? Why is it so effective?
- What is not working well enough? Are there particular concerns that need to be addressed? Have specific incidents shown a need to revisit the policy?
- Are all staff aware of the content of the current code of behaviour and is it being used consistently? Does this include recently appointed or substitute teachers?
- Are parents aware of the code and are they supporting it appropriately?
- Are pupils aware of the code and do they generally comply with it?
- What specific changes do we need to make to the existing code of behaviour to make it more effective?
- Are there aspects of the current code that are no longer relevant and should be deleted?
- Is the SPHE curriculum used throughout the school to support the Code of Behaviour? Does it help our children develop communication and conflict resolution skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving? Does it foster self-esteem and help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship?
- Are there specific programmes in use consistently throughout the school that contribute to promoting a positive atmosphere? e.g. Walk Tall, Circle Time, Bubble Time... Are they successful?
- Are other associated policies dovetailing successfully with the approaches outlined in the code of behaviour?

Appendix II: Factors to consider before proposing to suspend a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of suspension

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

Appendix III: Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?