



*Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire,
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Code of Behaviour

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore, any rules 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.

A 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 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 ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'. A Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.

School Expectations

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for other's property
- Respect other students and their learning
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Walk quietly in and around the school building
- Courtesy and good manners
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Ask permission to leave the classroom
- Do your best in class
- Take responsibility for your own work

These can be summed up as 6 main expectations;

- Respect
- Do your best
- Be tidy
- Be Safe
- Walk
- Listen

Class Contract

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules/contract with the children. Children may be asked to sign the rules/contact, if deemed appropriate by the class teachers. These contracts reflect and support the school rules but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (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.

Incentives

Part of the vision of Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire 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 based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. 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. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

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 merit marks or stickers/certificates
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

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.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Individual teachers may put in place alternative measures, bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Detention during break times. (May be termed Time-Out/Thinking Time). During this period, children will be encouraged to reflect upon the unacceptable behaviour, which gave rise to detention.
4. Prescribing extra work/writing/drawing about the incident/filling in a Reflection Sheet(s) (see appendices 1-4). Emphasis will be placed on what has been learned through the experience. This type of reflective activity is very effective, especially when used with children from 3rd class to 6th class (appendices 3 & 4), in focusing the child's attention on acceptable and unacceptable

behaviours. It can be used with younger children also, if and when appropriate (appendices 1 & 2). The decision will be at the class teacher's discretion.

If a child is required to reflect in this manner, a number of written/pictorial activities may take place before the first reflection sheet will be assigned, if the class teacher deems it appropriate. (Appendices 1 & 3) The first reflection sheet will be signed by the child and the class teacher only. If the child is required to fill a second reflection sheet, (Appendices 2 & 4), this form will be signed by the child, class teacher and the parent/parents. Copies of completed reflection sheets will be made available to parents upon request. All accounts of recorded misbehaviours are kept in the child's file in the respective classrooms.

- 5 Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
- 6 Loss of privileges
- 7 Communication with parents. This may happen at an earlier stage, if and when appropriate. Teachers may make contact through written correspondence or by telephone, depending on the circumstances.
- 8 Referral to Principal
- 9 Principal communicating with parents
- 10 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)

Teachers may combine a number of sanctions, if and when appropriate.

However, sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. A child, who does not do his/her work in class or has not completed his/her homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work, at the discretion of the class teacher.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Please Note: Detention at break time will not require prior notice to parents.

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as after-school detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a

pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied

that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (Infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)

- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School newsletter

Positive Behaviour in Our School

From the Child's Perspective:

I will show respect for myself and my own property by:

- **Attending school regularly and not missing days or half days without good reason.**
- **Arriving on time for school at 9a.m. Not leaving the school grounds without permission even if the ball goes onto the road.**
- **Wearing the school uniform.**
- **Taking part in class/school activities to the best of my ability**
- **Avoiding causing unnecessary disruption in class.**
- **Respecting and taking due care of my own property.**
- **Entering and exiting the school through the gates.**
- **Not using foul language, back answering or answering in an aggressive tone.**
- **Not engaging in any unacceptable use of the internet.**

Care and respect for Others and their Property.

- **I will respect and care for others and their property – schoolbags and their contents, shoes, coats, etc.**
- **I will show courtesy and good manners at all times. I will not speak or act aggressively towards other children in school or at any school related activities.**
- **I will avoid swearing, spitting, fighting and name calling.**
- **I will avoid running around corners, classrooms or hallways.**
- **I will never have in my possession any weapons such as penknives or other dangerous instruments.**
- **I will not take any money that is not my own.**
- **I will not take a mobile phone or other similar devices to school.**
- **I will never bully other children.**

Care and Respect for School Property.

- **I will keep my school and school grounds tidy and litter free.**
- **I will avoid taking chewing gum to school or to any school related activities**

- I will avoid taking glass bottles to school as they tend to shatter.
- I will avoid playing ball games inside the school or in front of gates or doorways.
- I will avoid taking mobile phones or any solvents, such as glue, tippex or sprays to school.
- I will take responsibility for and report loss or damage to school equipment – footballs, basketballs, sliotars, hurleys, helmets or any school furniture.

School Breaks.

Morning Break is at 10-50am. Lunch break is at 12-30pm.

- I will eat my lunch at my table, clean my table when finished and dispose of any waste in an appropriate manner.
- I will stop playing when the bell rings and line up with my class.
- I will not go into other classrooms during breaks, unless permitted by a teacher to do so.
- On wet days, I will stay in my classroom and engage in whatever activities are outlined by the class teacher or supervising teacher.

Homework.

It is the custom of the school to give regular homework to all classes. Homework in the infant classroom will be outlined by the infant teacher.

- I will complete all homework assignments to the best of my ability.
- I will make every effort to present it in a neat and tidy manner.
- I will ensure that I have all books and materials such as pens, pencils, rulers, etc. for school and homework.
- If homework is not complete, I will take a note of explanation to my class teacher.

Pupils Entering and Leaving the School.

- I will enter and leave the school/class in an orderly fashion and in accordance with instructions from my teachers.
- I will not engage in any unsupervised play activities immediately before or after official school time.
- I will show respect and care in the cloakroom
- I will show courtesy to people I meet at doorways and passageways.
- I will leave the school grounds when classes end at 1-40pm for infant pupils and at 2-40pm for all other classes
- I will not come back on the school grounds in the evening, at weekends or during holiday time without permission.

From the Parent's Perspective.

To allay your child's fears and anxieties, it would greatly be appreciated if you would:

- Send a note to explain absences.
- Send a note to explain not wearing uniform on a given day.
- Send a note to the class teacher if homework is not complete.
- Send an explanatory note to the class teacher if your child/children are leaving school early.
- Check regularly that homework is being done.
- Have your child, at school and collected, on time.
- Adhere to the traffic management instructions as outlined by the school management and respect the markings outlined in the school grounds.
- Ensure that the uniform is worn. – (It is the wish of the majority of parents.)
- Ensure that the tracksuit is worn on days when PE is timetabled.
- Encourage your child to adhere to the Code of Behaviour.
- Be available to discuss problems at a mutually convenient time.
- Ensure that your child has her/his books, copies, pens etc. in order.

From a Teacher's Perspective:

Teachers undertake to foster your child's development in a spirit of support and inclusion rather than scorn or criticism. The teachers:

- Will do their utmost to ensure a happy and safe environment for your child/ren.
- Will undertake the role of "in loco parentis" seriously.
- Will work in the interest of your child.
- Acknowledge difference, strengths and weaknesses.
- Keep abreast of educational change and adopt what may be of benefit to your children.
- Will inform you of any serious problems that may arise in relation to your child.
- Will apply sanctions firmly, but fairly.
- Seek support for children who need it.
- Will also be available to communicate with you at a mutually convenient time.
- Will do their best to accommodate all ranges of ability and encourage pupils to work to the best of their ability.
- It is not uncommon for children to need medication at different stages or on a continuous basis; teachers will do their best to accommodate this but are not allowed to take responsibility for administering it.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the

Board of Management of Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire on 11th April 2018

