

# Code of Positive Behaviour

## Introduction

Scoil Mhuire's Code of Positive Behaviour supersedes the school's older Code of Behaviour and Discipline. The revised Code has been drafted in consultation with the Staff, Pupils and Parents of Scoil Mhuire and has been approved by the Board of Management.

## Rationale

The Education Act (Amended) 2000 Section 23 (1) 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:

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

The Code was revised to ensure compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for schools, NEWB 2008.

The Code should be read with reference to:

- The Child Safeguarding Statement
- The Primary Curriculum
- The Health & Safety Statement
- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Admissions Policy
- The SPHE Policy

## Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our school's Mission Statement reads as follows:

*We, the staff of Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuilinn, are dedicated to the creation of a pleasant, relaxed, safe, controlled learning environment providing for the personal, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of each child.*

*We wish to enable each child to realize their maximum potential, to develop self-confidence, security and to develop as well-adjusted human beings and responsible citizens.*

Department of Education and Skill lists the general aims of primary education as follows:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
- To prepare the child for a continuum of learning

With these aims in mind, our school endeavours to provide a happy, safe, secure, friendly teaching and learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership with each other, and where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for his/her uniqueness and encouraged and facilitated to reach his/her full potential in a positive atmosphere. This is in line with our school's Mission Statement.

## **Aims**

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly fashion conducive to effective teaching and learning, where each pupil and work towards his/her potential
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout 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

## **Guiding Principles**

The Code of Behaviour of Scoil Mhuire is based on 6 Guiding Principles from which the School Rules are drawn. All members of the community of Scoil Mhuire, Pupils, Parents and Staff, are expected to observe the following 6 principles in their dealings and interaction with each other:

### **Respect**

Children are encouraged to have and show respect:

- For themselves
- For God (or the right of others to believe in God)
- For other people
- For their school and its property
- For their community

### **Tolerance**

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to be tolerant of differences in other people and to refrain from bullying or discrimination of any kind.

**Patience**

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to be patient with other people.

**Honesty**

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to be honest and truthful in their dealings with other people.

**Kindness**

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to show kindness to other people.

**Effort**

Children are encouraged to always do their best, in the way they behave, in the way they learn, in the way they work, in the way they play and in the way they interact with their environment.

**Discipline for Learning (DFL)**

In our school, we have a positive approach to teaching and learning. Positive rules for behaviour in class and out of class are learned by pupils at the beginning of their school year. Pupils are disciplined by being motivated to keep these rules.

**Restorative Practice**

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it, so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

**General Guidelines for Behaviour**

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both towards themselves and others, showing consideration of, courtesy towards and respect for others at all times.

Pupils are expected to behave in accordance with the Code's 6 Guiding Principles of:

- Respect
- Tolerance
- Patience
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Effort

**Content of Scoil Mhuire's Code of Positive Behaviour**

The Code covers the following areas:

1. Expected Standards of Behaviour
  - I. Behaviour in Class
  - II. Behaviour in the Yard
  - III. Behaviour in the School Environment and on School Outings
2. Behavioural Record
3. Rewards and Sanctions
4. Levels of Misbehaviour
5. Investigating Incidents of Misbehaviour
6. Suspension of Pupils
7. Expulsion of Pupils
8. Behaviour Contracts
9. Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour
10. Accommodations for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
11. Attendance at School/Education Welfare Act
12. Monitoring and Review

# 1. Expected Standards of Behaviour

## I. Behaviour in Class

The teacher and pupils will discuss and draft an agreed list of Class Rules/Behaviour Contract at the start of each academic year, which can be reviewed and amended as necessary. The Class Rules/Behaviour Contract will be displayed in the classroom and a copy given to each pupil.

The Class Rules/Behaviour Contract will be drafted in line with the following General Principles and General Classroom Rules:

### General Principles

- Pupils are expected to show courtesy and respect towards each other and towards school staff at all times. Disrespectful or aggressive behaviour towards other pupils or towards a staff member is not acceptable.
- Defiant, cheeky or insolent behaviour towards staff members will not be tolerated.
- Pupils are expected to treat school property with due care and respect.
- Pupils are expected to respect the right of other pupils to learn. Behaviour that interferes with the right (e.g. constant disruption of the class persistent distracting of others) is not acceptable.
- Pupils are expected to cooperate with instructions given by the Class Teacher or Special Needs Assistant.

### General Classroom Rules

Pupils are expected to:

- be on time for school, i.e. to attend punctually and regularly
- ask the teacher or SNA for permission before leaving the classroom
- walk slowly and quietly on the right-hand side on corridors, and when entering or leaving classroom
- be polite, courteous and respectful towards others
- show kindness, share with others and take turns
- sit properly on their seats and move quietly and safely around the classroom, as required
- follow the instructions of the teacher or SNA
- listen to teachers and other pupils when they are speaking
- put up their hands when they wish to speak to the teacher or the class
- refrain from interrupting the teacher or distracting others from their work
- do their best to learn
- show respect for school property
- keep their places tidy
- keep their classroom tidy and use bins properly
- remain seated quietly at breaktimes on wet days

## **II. Behaviour in the Yard**

### **General Principles**

Pupils are expected to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers themselves or others or offends others is not acceptable.

Pupils are expected to cooperate with instructions given by the supervising teacher or Special Needs Assistant.

Rough games that involve mock-fighting, pushing, pulling or running without due care and attention will not be allowed.

Games or activities considered by the supervising teacher or SNA to be dangerous will not be allowed.

Behaviour that interferes with or disrupts other pupils play is not allowed.

Aggressive language or behaviour towards other pupils or staff members is completely unacceptable. Fighting, intimidatory posturing or foul language will not be tolerated.

Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason without the permission of the supervising teacher or SNA, (this includes re-entering the school building.)

### **General Yard Rules**

Pupils are expected to:

- Follow the instructions of the supervising teacher or SNA
- Walk slowly and quietly on the right-hand side on corridors, when going to or coming from the yard
- Refrain from bringing food or drink out to the yard
- Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
- Get permission from the supervising teacher or SNA before leaving their yard
- Refrain from climbing up on boundary walls/fences
- Treat all school property with respect
- Play with consideration for others and with due regard for the safety of themselves and others
- Refrain from rough, dangerous games or activities
- Refrain from aggressive behaviour and language towards others
- Line up in an orderly fashion at the end of breaktimes

## **III. Behaviour in the School Environment and on School Outings**

### **General Principles and Rules**

Pupils are expected to:

- Wear the correct school uniform
- Refrain from wearing jewellery other than stud earrings, finger rings and watches
- Attend school regularly and punctually

- Refrain from leaving the school grounds without the permission of the Principal between 8:30 a.m. and 2:35 p.m.
- Be respectful of each other on their way to and from school
- Show respect and courtesy towards others at all times
- Refrain from any kind of verbal or physical aggression towards others
- Refrain from the use of foul language
- Refrain from bullying or intimidation of others, which is completely unacceptable and is always regarded as a serious offence
- Follow the instructions of teachers and SNAs
- Show respect for school property and public property at all times
- Move about the school in a calm and orderly manner
- Behave appropriately when using toilet facilities
- Refrain from bringing prohibited items to school, e.g. mobile phones, internet capable devices, cameras, unsuitable or inappropriate photographs or magazines, knives, sharp or dangerous objects, solvents, aerosols, chemicals, matches or lighters, cigarettes, vapes, alcohol, drugs
- Treat all school property with care
- Keep the school buildings and grounds clean, tidy and litter free

## **2. Behavioural Record**

A Behavioural Record will be maintained with respect to each pupil in the school, from the start of Junior Infants to the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Class.

The Behavioural Record will be privately and discretely maintained and updated by each Class Teacher, as appropriate, throughout each School Year.

Access to a pupil's Behavioural Record is restricted to the following personnel:

1. The Principal
2. The Deputy Principal
3. The Class Teacher of the particular School Year in question
4. The SEN Teacher (as appropriate)

The Behavioural Record will be securely maintained on Aladdin and only accessible by the above personnel.

A pupil's Behavioural Record for a given School Year will inform his/her End-of-Year Report in terms of reporting on the pupil's behaviour.

## **3. Rewards and Sanctions**

### **Rewards**

Reward systems will be used in both in class and in the school in general to reward and encourage positive behaviour.

Rewards will also form part of planned interventions to help individual students to manage their own behaviour.

At the beginning of each school year, the class teacher and the pupils will agree upon a system of rewards for good behaviour and improvements in behaviour. The class rewards system will be based upon the agreed list of appropriate rewards below:

### **Agreed Appropriate Rewards**

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a child's copy or homework journal
- A reward sticker
- Student of the Week/Dalta na Seachtaine Award
- A homework pass
- Praise in front of a group or class
- Occasional sweet treats, e.g. chocolate, ice cream
- Recognition at assembly
- A visit to the Principal's office
- A special duty, responsibility or privilege

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions will be used to help bring about a change in a pupil's behaviour by helping him/her:

- to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- to understand that he/she has choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping him/her to learn to take responsibility for his/her behaviour.

Sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe

Sanctions should

- be used in a way that will defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way
- be timely
- be proportionate and appropriate

The following is a NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST of sanctions that may be imposed for breaches of the Code.

### **Agreed Appropriate Sanctions**

#### **Level 1 (applied to address minor breaches of the Code)**



- A verbal reprimand
- Reasoning with the pupil
- A written reflective exercise
- A written behaviour reinforcement sheet (to be signed by parents/guardians)
- Withdrawal of minor privileges
- Detention at breaktime (seated outside the office or in the foyer, where he/she can be seen and supervised)
- An informal written message from the teacher to parents/guardians (email or note)
- An informal phonecall to parents/guardians

Extra homework will not normally be given as a Level 1 sanction unless:

- The pupil's misbehaviour in class has resulted in work not having been completed
- The pupil has failed to complete homework assignments previously given

### **Level 2 (applied to address less minor breaches of the Code)**

- Pupil is placed On Report\*
- A formal written message from the teacher to parents/guardians (email or note)
- A formal phonecall to parents/guardians
- Removal from a class group
- Change of seating arrangement

#### **\*On Report**

Pupils engaging in Less Minor breaches of the Code will be placed On Report by the class teacher or teacher in charge.

The pupil will be given a white On Report card, which he/she must then bring to the Principal. The Principal will discuss the behaviour with the pupil and will impose a yellow, orange or red card, as appropriate:

Yellow Card: First Offence. 2 detentions at lunch break. Email from teacher to parents.

Orange Card: Second Offence. 3 detentions at lunch break. Email from teacher to parents.

Red Card: Third Offence. 5 detentions at lunch break. Email from teacher to parents. Teacher and Principal meet parents.

Each Card will record the pupil's name and the date.

- Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group

### **Level 3 (applied to address persistent misbehaviour or significant breaches of the Code)**

- Referral to the Principal
- Recording of the incident in the Behaviour File

- Implementation of a Behaviour Contract
- Withdrawal from the classroom for a period of time
- Carrying out a useful task in the school
- Withdrawal of privileges, i.e. sporting events, trips, tours, extra-curricular activities\*\*
- Formal meeting between the teacher and parents/guardians

#### **\*\*Withdrawal of Privileges**

Selection to represent the school/participate in a sporting event, field trip or tour is a privilege, not a right or entitlement. The school reserves the right to withdraw privileges as a sanction for persistent/serious breaches of the Code.

#### **Level 4 (applied to address serious breaches of the Code)**

- A. A phonecall from the Principal to parents/guardians
- B. Formal letter from the Principal to parents/guardians
- C. Formal meeting between the Principal and parents/guardians

#### **Level 5 (applied to address very serious breaches of the Code)**

- A. Formal report to the Board of Management
- B. Formal letter from the Chairperson of the Board of Management to parents/guardians
- C. Formal meeting between Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and parents/guardians

#### **Level 6 (applied as a last resort and/or to address extremely serious breaches of the Code)**

- A. Suspension
- B. Expulsion

#### **Implementation of Sanctions for Misbehaviour**

1. In the first instance, the class teacher, or the teacher in charge, will address the minor misbehaviour and apply an appropriate, proportionate sanction (usually a Level 1 sanction)
2. If the misbehaviour continues, or in the case of less minor instances of misbehaviour, the class teacher or teacher in charge will decide upon the application of a Level 2 sanction. The teacher will record the misbehaviour and the sanction imposed on the Behavioural Record Card and place the pupil On Report.
3. If the misbehaviour continues, or in the case of instances of more significant misbehaviour, the class teacher or teacher in charge will inform and directly involve the Principal and agree upon the application of a Level 3 sanction. The teacher will record the misbehaviour and the sanction. The Principal will record the misbehaviour and the sanction on the Behavioural Record Card and place in the Behaviour File.

4. If the misbehaviour continues, or in the case of serious instances of misbehaviour, the teacher will involve the Principal and a Level 4 sanction will be applied. The Principal will record the misbehaviour and the sanction in the on the Behavioural Record Card and place in the Behaviour File and in the pupil's file.
5. In the case of persistent misbehaviour or in the case of very serious breaches of the Code, the Principal will invoke a Level 5 sanction and involve the Chairperson of the Board of Management and/or the Board of Management. The Principal will record the misbehaviour and the sanction in the Behaviour File and in the pupil's file.
6. In the case of extremely serious breaches of the Code, the Principal will call a meeting of the Board of Management and invoke a Level 6 sanction. See Section on Suspension and Expulsion below.

In implementing sanctions from Level 2 upward, it may be appropriate to include a sanction or a combination of sanctions from the levels below, e.g.

Change of Seating Arrangement (Level 2) **and** a Written Reflective Exercise (Level 1.)

## 4. Levels of Misbehaviour

It is important that sanctions applied for misbehaviour or breaches of the Code be appropriate and proportionate. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of various levels of misbehaviour:

### LEVEL 1: Minor Misbehaviour

- Chatting in class
- Leaving seat without permission
- Repeatedly interrupting or talking out of turn
- Not making a reasonable effort at work
- Scribbling or doodling on copies, covers, etc.
- Failure to wear the correct school uniform\*

\*While the primary responsibility here lies with parents, teachers will address non-wearing of the uniform directly with pupils in a measured, age-appropriate fashion. Consistent or repeated failure to comply with school policy will be regarded as Level 2: Less Minor Misbehaviour.

### LEVEL 2: Less Minor Misbehaviour: On Report

- Shouting in class/causing disturbance
- Insolent/cheeky behaviour
- Name calling or making fun of other pupils
- Refusal to cooperate with a teacher or staff member
- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Passing notes
- Refusing to complete a task
- General use of expletives/foul or inappropriate language

- Use of rude/offensive non-verbal gestures
- Neglect of of textbooks, copies and other materials provided by the school

### **LEVEL 3: Serious Misbehaviour**

- Consistent or repeated instances of Minor and/or Less Minor Misbehaviours, as outlined above
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Aggressive, abusive or threatening language towards others
- Use of foul language towards other pupils or staff members
- Use of inappropriate or graphic language in communications with other pupils or staff
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour, e.g. fighting
- Intimidation of another pupil or group
- Bullying another pupil or group of pupils, at school, outside of school or online \*

#### **\*Bullying another Pupil or Group of Pupils outside of school or online**

Scoil Mhuire does not tolerate Bullying, in any of its forms, at any time, of any pupil or pupils by any other pupil or pupils.

Our school does not distinguish between Bullying of our pupils that happens at school or outside of school. If Bullying is perpetrated upon any of our pupils outside of school, by any of our other pupils, it will be dealt with as if the Bullying had taken place at school.

- Embarrassing or ridiculing another pupil or group
- Graffiti on school property
- Abuse or destruction of textbooks, copies and other materials provided by the school
- Improper use of toilet facilities
- Ridicule of teachers or staff members within or outside of school\*\*

#### **\*\*Ridicule of Teachers or Staff Members Within or Outside of School**

The pupils of Scoil Mhuire are expected to treat all staff members of the school with dignity and respect, both at school and outside of school. Verbal, written, gestural or online ridicule of staff members is regarded as serious misbehaviour, unbecoming of pupils of our school.

- Bringing banned items to school, e.g. mobile phones
- Bringing the good name of the school into disrepute \*\*\*

**\*\*\* Bringing the Good Name of the School into Disrepute**

Scoil Mhuire values its positive reputation and good name within the local and wider community. Pupils of Scoil Mhuire are expected to refrain from behaviour that would tarnish the good name and standing of the school. As such, pupils are subject to the terms of this Code of Positive Behaviour in ALL of the following circumstances:

While in school buildings or on school grounds, during the School Year AND during holiday periods

On the school premises during the course of the school day, including the periods before the commencement of school and after school has finished

While travelling to/from school in the mornings and after school

While participating in school-related sports or extra-curricular activities on school grounds or elsewhere

While travelling on transport organised by the school for various purposes, e.g. school tours, swimming lessons, sporting events

While participating in events organised by the school away from the school premises, e.g. field trips, concerts, sporting events

At all times while wearing the school uniform which identifies them as pupils of Scoil Mhuire

**LEVEL 4: Very Serious Misbehaviour**

- Consistent or repeated instances of Serious Misbehaviour, as outlined above
- Consistent failure to abide by the terms of a Behavioural Contract
- Persistent bullying of another pupil or group
- Breach of the schools Acceptable Use Policy
- Breach of the school's Substance Use Policy
- Purposeful abuse, damage or destruction of school property
- Theft of school property
- Persistent use of foul language
- Persistent aggressive, abusive or threatening language towards others
- Harassment or intimidation of teachers or staff members within or outside of school\*

**\*Harassment or Intimidation of Teachers or Staff Members Within or Outside of School**

The pupils of Scoil Mhuire are expected to treat all staff members of the school with dignity and respect, both at school and outside of school. Harassment or Intimidation of any staff member, in the form of inappropriate or offensive verbal comments or gestures; unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact; being followed or loitered around; inappropriate emails, letters, phone calls and postings on social media, is regarded as a very serious matter and will be dealt with, as a minimum, as very serious misbehaviour. Depending on the seriousness of the incident(s), the Board of Management may refer the matter to An Garda Síochána.

- Discriminatory language or behaviour towards a pupil, staff member or a member of the school community on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social or economic status, physical appearance, age, disability etc.
- Persistent aggressive or threatening behaviour, e.g. fighting
- Highly inappropriate or sexually suggestive language towards a pupil, staff member or member of the school community

- Inappropriate touching (or threats of same) of other pupils or staff members
- Bringing dangerous banned items to school

#### **LEVEL 5: Extremely Serious Misbehaviour**

- Consistent or repeated instances of Very Serious Misbehaviour, as outlined above
- Persistent bullying of another pupil or group and demonstrable failure to engage and cooperate with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures
- Failure to abide by a Behavioural Contract put in place post Suspension
- Serious wilful destruction of school property
- Threat to seriously assault, injure or kill a pupil or staff member
- Threat to sexually assault a pupil or staff member
- Incitement to hatred of a pupil, staff member or a member of the school community on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social or economic status, physical appearance, age, disability etc.
- Actual physical assault causing harm to a pupil or staff member
- Actual or attempted sexual assault of a pupil or staff member

#### **Inappropriate Sanctions**

- Physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment (physical chastisement of a student is illegal under section 24 of the Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997)
- Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a student's self confidence
- Public or private humiliation
- Applying sanctions to whole groups or classes in cases of individual or small-group wrongdoing
- Leaving a student in an unsupervised situation (e.g. alone in a classroom at breaktime)
- Persistent isolation of, or ignoring, a student in class
- Exclusion from Art, P.E. etc. (apart from cases where the misbehaviour occurred during or directly before these classes)
- Sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way (the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 require that schools do not discriminate in the use of sanctions)

Temporarily removing a student from the classroom to a supervised location (e.g. outside the office) may be appropriate in the interests of classroom management in order to ensure the learning of other students and to help the individual student to recognise and learn about the impact and consequences of their behaviour.

## **5. Investigating Incidents of Misbehaviour**

Most instances of misbehaviour by a pupil in class will be witnessed by either a class teacher or a SNA. In such cases, the teacher will decide upon the appropriate sanction to be applied.

When the class teacher becomes aware of the incident or behaviour, that neither he/she nor a SNA has witnessed, he/she will adopt a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach to investigating the incident. This may involve:

- asking the whole class or groups within the class what happened
- asking each pupil in the class to write down on a sheet of paper what he/she knows about the incident
- speaking to individual pupils or groups of pupils outside the classroom about the incident\*
- enlisting the assistance of the Principal in investigating the incident
- contacting a pupil's parents/guardians to seek their assistance in investigating the incident

\*The school reserves the right to speak to any and all pupils in the course of investigating actual, alleged or suspected incidents of misbehaviour. Prior parental consent is not required.

When the evidence collected suggests that a particular pupil has breached the Code, he/she will be questioned by the class teacher and/or Principal. The pupil will be reminded of the importance of telling the truth as a means of helping to put right what has taken place.

Regarding instances of misbehaviour that have taken place outside of school hours and outside the school premises, the school will not normally apply sanctions in these cases unless specifically requested by the misbehaving pupil's own parents/guardians to do so, as part of an agreed home-school behaviour management strategy.

It is important to note, however, that if a pupil engaging in misbehaviour is clearly identifiable as being a member of the school community (i.e. wearing the school uniform) he/she may be subject to the imposition of an appropriate sanction, as provided for in this Code under *Serious Misbehaviour: Bringing the Good Name of the School into Disrepute*.

He/she may also be made aware that future occurrences may inform the school's decision regarding the pupil's participation in extra-curricular, out-of-school activities such as trips, tours, outings and attendance at sporting events on the grounds that the pupil's good behaviour out-of-school cannot be relied upon.

It is also important to note that a pupil's out-of-school behavioural record may be taken into account when breaches of the Code at school are being investigated.

## 6. Suspension of Pupils

Section 23 (2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires schools to include in their Code of Behaviour the procedures that are to be followed before a child is suspended or before a student is expelled from the school. Factors to consider before suspending a student are as follows:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact on behaviour on others
- Interventions implemented to address the behaviour
- The proportionality of suspension in responding to the behaviour
- The consequences of the suspension for the pupil

The decision to suspend a pupil is a matter for the Board of Management. In most cases, other interventions will have been implemented and sanctions applies before suspension will be considered.

Where suspension of a pupil is being considered, the Principal will conduct a preliminary investigation to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension.

If the Principal feels that suspension of a pupil is warranted, he, in consultation with the Chairperson, will convene a meeting of the Board of Management to discuss the issue.

The Board of Management will consider the suspension of a pupil if it agrees that one or more of the following criteria have been met:

- the behaviour in question has had a serious detrimental effect on teaching and learning in the class
- The behaviour in question poses a threat to the personal safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- The pupil's attendance at school at that time constitutes a general health and safety risk
- The pupil is responsible for wanton destruction of school property
- The pupil has seriously breached the schools Acceptable Use Policy or Substance Use Policy
- The pupil's behaviour towards another pupil or staff member has been highly inappropriate

### **Period of Suspension**

The maximum single period of suspension will normally be 5 days. A student will not be suspended for more than 5 days except in certain exceptional circumstances i.e. that the Board of Management believes that a period of more than 5 days is required to achieve a particular objective.

The Board will formally review any approval to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more.

### **Appeal**

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.



### **Pupils Returning from Suspension**

Following, or during a period of suspension parents/guardians must give a satisfactory written undertaking that the suspended pupil will comply with the Code and must satisfy the Principal that the pupil's return to school will not present a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.

The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the student (if appropriate) will prepare a behaviour support plan for the pupil.

### **Repeated Suspensions as Grounds for Expulsion**

In the case where a pupil has been suspended from school for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time during the same school year, the pupil and his/her parents will be issued notice, in writing, by the Board of Management that, should the pupil's behaviour within that school year merit another period of suspension, the pupil will automatically be expelled from the school (see Section 5. Expulsion of Pupils.)

### **Emergency Exclusion from School**

The Board of Management authorises the Principal to exclude a pupil from school at any point during the school day until the following day if, in his considered opinion, the pupil's continued presence at school that day would:

- have a serious detrimental effect on teaching and learning in the class
- pose a threat to the personal safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- constitute a general health and safety risk
- result in the destruction of school property

This temporary exclusion does not formally constitute suspension.

Temporary exclusion will not be used as an intervention as part of a formal, agreed Behaviour Management Plan or Contract.

## **7. Expulsion of Pupils**

A student is expelled from a school when the Board of Management decides to permanently exclude him/her from the school having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The Board of Management has authority to expel a student.

Expulsion of a student is an extreme measure, and will only be taken by the Board of Management in exceptional instances of unacceptable behaviour.

### **Deciding to Expel**

The school seeks to avoid having to take the extreme step of expelling a pupil. The school will normally have put significant interventions in place to address the misbehaviour, such as:

- Maintaining a Student Support File
- Implementing a Behavioural Care Plan

- Meeting with the parents and the pupil to explore ways of addressing the behaviour.
- Helping the pupil to understand the possible consequences of their continued misbehaviour
- Engaging the support of agencies such as National Service for Psychology in Education (NCSE), Health Service Executive(HSE), The National Behavioural Support, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The decision to suspend a pupil is a matter for the Board of Management.

Where expulsion of a pupil is being considered, the Principal will conduct a preliminary investigation to establish the case for the expulsion of the pupil.

If the Principal feels that expulsion of a pupil is warranted he, in consultation with the Chairperson, will convene a meeting of the Board of Management to discuss the issue.

The Board of Management will consider the suspension of a pupil if it agrees that one or more of the following criteria have been met:

- The behaviour in question has had a serious, persistent detrimental effect on teaching and learning in the class
- The behaviour in question poses an ongoing threat to the personal safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- The pupil's continued attendance at school constitutes a general health and safety risk
- The pupil is responsible for persistent, wanton destruction of school property
- The pupil has seriously, persistently breached the schools Acceptable Use Policy or Substance Use Policy
- The pupil's has a record of highly inappropriate behaviour towards another pupil or staff member
- The pupil's behaviour throughout a given school year is sufficient to merit suspension for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time.

### **Expulsion for a First Offence**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil for a first offence in the following exceptional circumstances:

- The pupil has issued a serious threat of physical or sexual violence against another student or a member of staff
- The pupil has committed or attempted to commit physical or sexual assault on another student or a member of staff
- The pupil has supplied illegal substances to other students in the school

**Appeal**

Parents of the expelled pupil will be informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998.

**8. Behaviour Contracts**

A behaviour contract is an agreement between the school, a pupil and his/her parents/guardians which specifies expected behaviours, positive consequences of meeting agreed behavioural targets and sanctions for failing to meet agreed targets or abide by the contract. Behaviour Contracts can be utilised as follows:

A Class Behaviour Agreement with all pupils in a class, with significant input from the pupils of the class, outlining the basic class rules and routines, the consequences that will accrue from abiding by these rules and routines, and the consequences for pupils on the occasions when these rules and routines are not followed.

Individual Behaviour Contracts specific to individual pupils, drawn up by the class teacher and the Principal, with significant input from the pupils in question. The contract should focus primarily on the positive consequences for complying with the contract, as well as on the negative consequences of failing to do so.

A Behavioural Contract will remain in place for the duration of the School Year in which it was put in place, unless this occurs during the final term, in which case the Behavioural Contract may carry over into the next School Year.

**9. Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour**

Scoil Mhuire's Code of Behaviour provides the basis for a whole school approach to promoting good behaviour and for responding to unacceptable behaviour.

The overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy falls to The Board of Management and the Principal.

Teachers and SNAs are responsible for the effective and consistent implementation of the Code.

Teachers have responsibility for their own classes during instruction time and for the pupils in their care while on supervision duty in the yard or on trips, outings, excursions, etc.

All senior members of the school community, staff members and parents, have a responsibility to give good example to pupils in their interactions with each other. Senior students also have a role to play in modelling good behaviour to younger pupils.

Scoil Mhuire seeks to promote and reward positive behaviour by default and to address challenging behaviour when necessary. In the interest of promoting positive behaviour,

time will be allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code and development of positive behaviour strategies.

As regards addressing challenging behaviour, the advice and support of agencies such as support The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is engaged.

The following strategies are used to promote positive behaviour

- Praise & recognition
- Buddy systems
- Rewards
- Golden Time
- Stamps & stickers
- Assembly – reinforcement and acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Whole school acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Behaviour contracts

## **10. Accommodations for Pupils with Behavioural Care Needs**

Our school recognises that the Code will need to be applied in a differentiated fashion to pupils with Behavioural Care Needs (BCN). This will mean that pupil's behaviour may need to be interpreted differently to that of another pupil who does not have BCN and that consequently, the Code's system of rewards and sanctions may also need to be applied differently.

For the purposes of defining a pupil with Behavioural Care Needs, the following criteria shall apply:

- The pupil has professionally identified Behavioural Care Needs
- The pupil's parents/guardians have indicated on the Application for Enrolment form that the pupil has SEN and/or BCN and have submitted all relevant documentation e.g. professional reports identifying Behavioural Care Needs to the school
- The pupil has been assigned access to SNA support
- The pupil has a Student Support Plan and/or Behavioural Care Plan in place, that has been drawn up in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, the child's class teacher, SEN teacher and SNA.
- The pupil's professional reports are reasonably up-to-date

Sanctions may be needed to help a student with BCN needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student. However, teachers should take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs.

## 11. Attendance/Education Welfare Act

Parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure that their child attends a school or otherwise receives an education. Under Section 17 of the Education Welfare Act 2000: *“A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at ‘a national school or other suitable school’ on each day that the school is open for instruction.”*

Parents/Guardians must account for their child(ren)’s absences via Aladdin Connect and, where applicable, supply medical certificates or other relevant documentation to the school.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- discussing planned absences with the school
- refraining from taking holidays during school time
- ensuring, where possible, that children’s appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours
- notifying the school in writing if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

The school must inform The Education Welfare Officer EWO/Tusla Education Support Services TESS:

- of pupils absent for 20 or more days over the course of a school year
- if a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days

## 12. Monitoring and Review

The Code will be monitored in terms of:

- Its effect on positive behaviour in classrooms, the yard and school environment
- Its consistent implementation by staff
- Positive feedback from staff, parents and pupils

The Code will be reviewed in the light of experience and in response to Department of Education and Skills requirements.

This Update to the Code of Positive Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

	
Terry Kavanagh Príomhoide	Christopher O'Neill Chairperson