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**Scoil Réalt na Mara,  
Kilmore,  
Co. Wexford.  
Fr Jim Doyle,  
(Chairperson of Board)  
Micheál Martin ( Principal)**

## **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.

### **1.1 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 school 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

### **1.2 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 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 children to behave according to the golden rules, listed in 2.1.

### **1.2(i) Role of the Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to support the Principal and staff in implementing the policy. The Board will be informed at its subsequent meeting if a suspension has taken place, with due care being given to the confidentiality of the situation.

### **1.3 Communicating with Parents**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers will 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 will 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 notice board
- Monthly newsletter
- Telephone/Text contact

### **2.1 School Rules**

- 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 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 **The Golden Rules** and are displayed widely around the school

*Be gentle*

*Be kind and helpful*

*Be honest*

*Work hard*

*Look after property*

*Listen to people*

*Hurt anyone*

*Hurt people's feelings*

*Cover up the truth*

*Waste time*

*Waste or damage things*

*Interrupt*

## 2.2 Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

## 2.3 Incentives

Part of the vision of Kilmore School is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are 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 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/rewards 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
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.
- Golden time
- Short-Term interventions and rewards such as best Line, reward time in yard.

## 3.1 Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by a member of staff. In cases of serious misbehavior or a single instances of gross misbehavior parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or

Principal to discuss their child's behaviour. Incidents will be documented to help identify patterns of behavior, triggers and for referral to the care team. The Care Team will decide on the service that best suits the child's particular needs and act accordingly.

Examples of minor misbehavior include:

- Not following Golden Rules
- Disrupting class
- Interrupting
- Wasting time
- Interfering with others
- Distracting others
- Having mobile phone switched on during school hours

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Repeated behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Refusal to co-operate with an instruction
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Smoking
- Possession of any object that could cause damage or harm
- **Showing disregard for health and safety rules of the school**

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- **Intentionally spitting or coughing in another person's face or vicinity.**

In cases of repeated minor misbehaviour or single instances of serious or gross misbehaviour, parents will be informed at an early stage. This communication will take the form of the notes in the Homework Journal/ **Aladdin**, letters home and then an invitation to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour

### **3.2 Sanctions**

Sanctions will be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the student and take account of the cultural background of the student. Sanctions will be sensitive to the particular circumstances of vulnerable individuals or groups of students (for example, a child in care or a child with special educational needs).

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

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

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves 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 or sequential. 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. Repetition of task if not satisfactorily completed
4. Recording of incident in Yard book or class book.
5. Communication with parents
6. Request to parents to collect their child for the rest of the day.
7. Spending lunch break indoors completing work.
8. Prescribing extra work
9. Temporary separation from peers within class or in the yard
10. Loss of privileges
11. Referral to Principal
12. Principal communicating with parents
13. 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)

Board of Management will be informed of suspension at subsequent meeting.

Sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

### **3.3 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, special needs assistants and/or Principal will work closely with the home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from the National Education Psychological Services, psychologist or from other 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.

### **4.1 Suspension and Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For a single incidence of serious or gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension will 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 staff member 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.

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, and members of the discipline committee, 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, staff, or school property, the Board has authorised the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

#### **4.2 Immediate Suspension**

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the principal and the discipline committee to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will follow the imposition of the suspension.

In the case of immediate suspension, the Chairperson of the Board of Management and parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

#### **4.3 Period of Suspension**

A student will 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. The Board of Management will provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than three days might be approved. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

#### **4.4 Appeals**

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

#### **4.5 Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*. At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and will be given information about how to appeal.

#### **4.6 Implementing the suspension**

The principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm

- The period of the suspension
- The dates on which the suspension will begin and end

- The reasons for the suspension
- The arrangements for returning to the school including any commitments to be entered into by the parents and the students (for example parents and the student 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 Dept of Ed + Science (Ed Act 1998 section 2)

Where parents do not agree to meet with the principal written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

#### **4.7 Grounds for removing 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*.

#### **5.1 Expulsion**

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.

#### **5.2 Authority to expel**

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

#### **5.3 The grounds for expulsion**

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student 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 misbehavior and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behavior
- making sure that the student 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).

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

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 student. 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.

### **5.5 Details of these procedures are available from the School or the NEWB**

### **5.6 Appeals**

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Skills). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

### **5.6 Review of use of expulsion**

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

Updated 08/09/2020