



## Muire Na Dea Chomhairle Infant School. Code Of Behaviour

### • **Introductory Statement**

This revised policy was drawn up by members of staff in consultation with a representative group of parents and the parent representatives on the BOM, to ensure that life for everybody in school is happy and relaxed yet well ordered and disciplined. The process was completed during the first term of the 2016/17 school year.

- **Rationale** A review of the Code of Behaviour was initiated because (i) New Anti- Bullying Procedures (DES 0045/2013) (ii) NEWB guidelines "Developing a Code of Behaviour" (iii) the existing policy is due for review and amendment (iv) the promotion of a positive behaviour is a priority area identified by staff and (v) to provide guidance to all members of the school community in dealing with pupil behaviour.

### • **Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

An effective Code of Behaviour supports the school community in ensuring that all children can be happy in our school and that all children will enjoy learning in an environment that is safe and secure. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers/Staff/Parents and visitors from the wider community.

### • **Aims**

In revising the Code of Behaviour the school seeks

- ***To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way***
- ***To enhance the learning environment for children and staff***
- ***To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others***
- ***To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline whilst recognising differences between children and an understanding of the factors that influence behavior.( eg cultural/SEN)***
- ***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.***

### **Guidelines**

A strong sense of community and co-operation is required from staff, pupils and parents to implement the code and to ensure that all procedures are carried out in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. In the belief that the most effective schools cultivate positive home-school relationships with parents and teachers working in partnership, every effort will be made by the principal teacher and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are informed not only when their children have misbehaved but when they have behaved particularly well.

Each child will be consistently praised for good behaviour and for improvements in behaviour by staff to allow for a positive school environment for all children. In cases of unacceptable behaviour pupils will be sanctioned in accordance with the gravity of the misbehaviour. 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 taking into account the gravity and or frequency of such unacceptable behavior whilst always taking into account factors that influence behaviour.

### **General guidelines for behaviour**

- ⇒ All children are expected to be well behaved and to show consideration and respect for other children and for adults in the school community - in the classroom - at playtime - on the corridors - in the toilet areas - on school outings - before and after school.
- ⇒ Children are expected to show respect for the property of the school, to respect the property of other children and to take care of their own belongings
- ⇒ Each child is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual - all absences must be reported to teacher by a written note (*ref. Attendance at School Policy*)
- ⇒ Each child is expected to do his/her best in school and to undertake homework to the best of his/her ability ( *ref. Homework Policy*)
- ⇒ Specific rules have been drawn together to guide pupil behaviour throughout the school ( *Appendix A*)

### **Praise will be given by means of any one of the following:**

A quiet word or gesture to show approval, comment in a pupil's exercise book, Visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation (Fantastic Friday), Word of praise in front of a group or class, system of merit marks or merit badge, Delegating a privilege/responsibility where appropriate, Mention to parent, written or verbal communication (in presence of the child) Individual systems of praise in classrooms.

## **1. Steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of \*minor misbehaviours**

### **within the classroom**

Reason & reprimanding the pupil by class teacher, communication with parents (informal)

Note in homework copy (where appropriate)/ Temporary separation from peers /SEN/ / **Red Card Option( especially where teacher on own in classroom)** ,Time out from some class activity. *Recording of repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour by teacher where necessary*

**\*Playground** – written report in the Daily Playground Record Sheet/Class Teacher

[Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/other pupils/staff at risk]

## **2. Steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours**

### **Within the Classroom**

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. **Red Card Option( especially where teacher on own in classroom)**

Before resorting to serious sanctions, the normal channels of **\*communication** between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

**\*Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.**

**\*Playground (Consistent serious Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/other pupils/staff at risk where steps above have failed)]**

### **Sanction:**

**To miss some /all of yard time at the discretion of the Principal**

**3. In cases of \*extremely serious misbehaviour ie where there are repeated instances of behaviour which gravely endangers property, pupils and/or others including aggressive, threatening or violent behavior though always taking into account factors that influence behaviour:**

**Red Card Option( especially where teacher on own in classroom)**

**(A) 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 principal teacher. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of \*\*Rule 130 (5) of the *Rules for National Schools*. and(chapter11 *Developing a code of behaviour guidelines for schools NEWB*)**

***(B)In cases of gross misbehaviour the board will authorise the chairperson or principal teacher to sanction an immediate suspension, as per 11.4 (NEWB guidelines)pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/Return may be on a shortened day to ascertain if behaviour has improved,in time returning to the correct length.***

**\*\* Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of discipline to deal with continuously disruptive pupils or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the Chairperson or Principal to exclude pupil or pupils from school, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school-days.**

**A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school-days to allow for consultation with the pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.**

***The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. (National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour, chapter 12 (May 2008).***

***See procedures for Suspension /expulsion below***

## Suspension

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

The Board of Management has deferred responsibility to the Principal to impose an initial sanction of suspension for a period of up to three days. The BoM with the approval of the Chairperson may wish to authorise the Principal to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The BoM should generally put a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension (***In cases of gross misbehaviour See 3.B***) to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

In the case of any suspension the Principal will notify the Chairperson of the BOM

All suspensions will be reported at BOM meetings.

Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil will generally be in writing. Where a suspension is to be activated the principal shall notify the parents/guardians of the decision in writing and shall confirm:

- the period of suspension, the dates when it will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to School including commitments to be entered into by the pupil

The right to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (if the total number of days for which the student has been suspended reaches 20 days in any single School year) Parents will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the BoM in relation to suspension in writing from the Chairperson of the BOM/Principal. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the School was notified to the parent.

## Grounds for Removing 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 Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

**EXPULSION:** A pupil is expelled from school when a BoM makes a decision to permanently exclude the pupil from the school having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education(Welfare) Act 2000.

Expulsion will normally be considered only as a final step on the continuum of sanctions for extreme cases of serious or gross misbehaviour/s and/or persistence of such misbehaviour, and/or where school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and consider all other alternatives have been exhausted.**The school will normally have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion such as:**

- Meeting with parents and meeting with the pupil to seek to help the pupil to behave appropriately,
- Ensuring that the pupil/parent understands the consequences of his/her behaviour should it persist,
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried,
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Tusla/Education Welfare and other relevant agencies.

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

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student 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 include: a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault.

Procedures when dealing with serious/gross misbehaviour where there are grounds for expulsion:

The Infant School will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend/expel a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following will apply:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A report and recommendation will be made to the BoM by the Principal
3. Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's report and recommendations and the holding of a hearing involving all parties.
4. BoM deliberations and actions following the hearing:
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The above steps are outlined in detail in Section 12.4 (Steps 1-6) pages 82-86 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB)

**If the BoM is of the opinion that the student will be expelled,** the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB has received written notification. The NEWB will be notified using a Notice of Intention to Expel Form. This form will be completed and sent to School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green St, Dublin 7.

**Appeals:** A parent/guardian may appeal an expulsion decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the NEWB on behalf of 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 (Section 12 – DES Circular 22/02). Parents will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the BoM in relation to expulsion in writing from the Chairperson of the BOM/Principal

## **Code of Behaviour and Incidents of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others (*ref. Anti-Bullying Policy*). The school has developed an Anti Bullying policy which indicates how the school responds when incidents of bullying are identified/reported. Sanctions for dealing with instances of bullying are as laid out \*

### **Success Criteria**

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils
- Observation of behaviour in class rooms, corridors, playground and in school environment
- Pupils more responsible for their own behaviour
- Pupils positive about all aspects of school life

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal teacher. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil will normally be referred to the class teacher for incidents of misbehaviour. Referral to the Principal/Deputy Principal is reserved for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour. The role of parents is to support the Code and to co-operate with the school in implementing the Code of Behaviour.

### **Implementation Date**

The policy will come into operation early in November 2016.

### **Timetable for Review**

This policy will be formally reviewed as necessary – meanwhile the implementation of the policy as stated will be informally monitored and evaluated by the Principal and teachers in the school.

### **Ratification & Communication**

The BOM officially ratified the policy at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016

1. The Code of Behaviour will be provided as part of the welcome pack to all new entrants to the school.
2. Changes to the Code of Behaviour will be notified to parents through the newsletter.
- 3 The Code of Behaviour will always be available to parents on request (from Principal's Office)
- 4.The Code of Behaviour will always be available to the Parents Association
5. The Code of Behaviour will always be available on the school website.

The code includes the following appendixes

Appendix A: Classroom Rules, Toilet Rules

Appendix B: Playground Rules, Wet day Rules

## Appendix A

### Classroom Rules

- **Be on Time, Be Prepared** - this means that pupils come to school in time, wear uniform, have all books, pencils etc, and have homework done
- **Do as you are asked** by teachers and school staff
- **Raise your hand** to ask permission before you leave your seat/ leave the classroom
- **Listen** when teacher speaks, Listen when others speak
- **Be attentive** and always do your best
- **Be helpful not hurtful** - this means that you keep your hands and feet to yourself
- **Be a friend** - this means that you treat others with respect and care
- **Take care of your belongings** - do not waste, steal or damage things

### Toilet Rules

**Pupil toilets are located at upper and lower end of school corridor, each block containing separate toilets for boys and girls.**

Pupils must therefore leave classrooms individually or in small groups (with permission from teacher) to go to the toilet. At times teacher will supervise class toilet breaks.

It is essential that the following rules be observed to ensure safe and hygienic access to toilet facilities for all pupils.

- ✓ Pupils should **flush toilets** after each use
- ✓ Remember to **wash hands** –thermostatically controlled water and soap are provided
- ✓ **Dry hands** under the Dryer
- ✓ Pupils should **return to classrooms** without delay in an orderly manner

#### For Parents –

It is important that children are taught how to use the toilet properly, and are able to wash and dry their hands prior to starting school.

## Appendix B

### Playground Rules

Pupils go to playground each day, weather permitting at 11.30 until 12.00am. This time allows children to exercise, play games, meet friends and have fun in an outdoor environment.

To ensure the safety of everybody - pupils must enter and leave the playground in an orderly manner in class lines. Each class teacher will supervise his/her own class to and from playground.

*Supervision :-* The school playground is supervised by a two teachers and SNA's at all times. All pupils must observe the following rules during playground time

- ✓ Pupils must remain in the playground at all times, no child may leave playground without permission from duty teacher
- ✓ Pupils must remain within designated areas.
- ✓ Pupils may go to the toilet with permission from teacher
- ✓ Pupils must **not** climb/throw stones/litter in the playground – food is not allowed in the playground
- ✓ Pupils may **not** hit/fight or physically hurt other children or engage in horseplay of any kind
- ✓ All accidents must be reported to teacher on duty, where necessary duty teacher will ensure that treatment is provided
- ✓ Incidents of unacceptable behaviour etc must be reported to teachers on duty who will deal with the matter. Serious incidents/accidents will be noted in playground record sheet by teacher on duty and sanctions given\*
- ✓ Pupils must obey and respect the teacher/SNA's on duty
- ✓ When bells rings all children then walk to class line, joining line at the end
- ✓ Pupils are collected from class lines by class teacher and escorted to classroom.

#### **\* Sanctions for Misbehaviour at Playtime**

**Minor Incidents :** Children are encouraged to sort out minor disagreements between themselves with the help of teacher ,  
**Stay Stop** – children must stop when asked by child. *c/f Stay Safe Code*

#### **More Serious Incidents**

1. Reason with pupils
2. Time-Out from Playing
3. Referral to D-Principal/Principal
4. (activate Phase 2/3 Code of Behaviour)

#### **Wet Days - children will remain in classrooms during breaktime**

- On wet days an announcement will be made to classes at 11.15am (where possible)
- 2 teachers will patrol the corridor and check classrooms
- Children will be given activities/games/funsheets by class teacher for breaktime
- Children may also eat lunch during breaktime

- Children *must remain in their seats at all times* during wet day supervision