



Code of Behaviour

Ní neart go cur le chéile

1. Title

Code of Behaviour

2. Introductory Statement

This Plan was formulated in conjunction with school staff, students, parents, and the Board of Management (referred to from here on in as BOM) to provide a comprehensive policy for the school community that will help us to create a safe, happy environment for all. The Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour, issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB from here on) and the School Development Planning (SDP) website were used as primary sources. This plan was formulated in the 1st term of 2008-09.

This plan was reviewed in October and November of 2014 in consultation with the Board of Management, staff, and Parents' Committee. This plan was reviewed in October of 2015, September 2016, October 2017, February 2018, August 2020 (taking Covid-19 rules into account), October 2022 and during the school year 2023/2024.

3. Rationale

This plan was formulated as:

- To ensure that the good practice of the school was officially recorded
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- In conjunction with the DES Circular 20/90
- We wish to provide a healthy, organised, happy community in our school and this is easier to achieve when all parties are clear on their roles.
- That there will be an agreed approach by all members of community when encouraging good and discouraging bad behaviour.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school.

4. Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

- Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín's vision is to create a positive, caring, open learning environment, where each child's individuality is celebrated, encouraged and nurtured.
- As a Gaelscoil, we foster a love and respect of the Irish Language, culture and traditions. Irish is the language of the school and is promoted in a positive way throughout the whole community.
- Our school creates an environment where a love of learning inspires and motivates both students and teachers alike.
- Parents, as partners in education are welcomed and encouraged to participate openly in all aspects of school life.
- GSBB promotes a care and respect of the environment in all members of its community
- GSBB is an interdenominational school and a respect and understanding of both Catholic and Protestant traditions will be promoted.
- Through this policy, we aspire to create a situation whereby we can fulfil our vision as laid out above.

5. Aims

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others

- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To ensure that there is an open, safe situation available for the whole school community, that ensures that everyone shows respect for themselves, each other, the school environment and the Irish language.
- To motivate students to manage their own behaviour.
- That all students will be afforded the opportunity to think about the effect their actions have on others and on the environment
- That the “Polasaí Labhairt na Gaeilge” will be implemented in the school.

6. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults

- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children’s and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Each pupil is expected to always speak Irish, in conjunction with our Polasaí Labhairt na Gaeilge.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the school environment and the environment in general.
- The principal will provide parents of children registering in the school with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour. Parents will be required to confirm in writing that code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child. This code will be clearly explained at registration meetings and at the school’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year, to ensure that all families fully understand all areas of this policy. Parents will also be given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have to ensure that it is fully understood.

7. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

There is huge importance of taking a whole school approach to promotion of positive behaviour. Many policy and curricular areas are grounded in this importance e.g. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), anti-bullying, home-work, registration, Labhairt na Gaeilge. In April 2024, the teaching staff attended a Restorative Practice workshop given by an Associate from Oide with the viewing of making it a part of school practices and the Code of Behaviour.

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

We expect high standards of behaviour from everyone in our school community and that this behaviour is always both positive and cooperative.

Staff

In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour ... 'It is important that the policy is accepted by all staff.' (Circular 20/90).

- Here are some methods in which positive behaviour are both recognised and encouraged in our school. – Prizes and awards, regular contact with parents, positive behaviour being recognised at assembly etc
- Open communication is to the fore in our school. This Code and its effects are regularly referred to at both staff and Board meetings. Every support is given to staff in their implementation of it.
- This code is communicated to new staff members at the first staff meeting of the year. Both this and all school policies are given to new staff at the start of every year. Time will be set aside for the principal/other teacher to discuss this with them and to ensure clarity. We also provide a forum for induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs).
- This code of behaviour caters for children who may present behavioural difficulties arising from their special education needs. e.g. Continuum of Supports are drawn up in conjunction with parents and other staff members as needs arise. The principal and learning support teacher can be involved in this.
- The emphasis will always be on promoting respect and all teachers will treat children and parents with respect when dealing with behavioural issues.
- The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.
- Activities which are scheduled to develop these skills in children are Circle Time/Stay Safe/assembly time etc
- In January 2024, as part of the update of the Code of Behaviour, all teachers and SNAs attended a presentation 'Managing behaviours of Concern: Limiting your liability' by Mason Hayes Curran with David Ruddy & Siobhán Allen
- In April 2024, the teaching staff attended a Restorative Practice workshop given by an Associate from Oide with the viewing of making it a part of school practices and the Code of Behaviour.

Board of Management

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

- The school's Board of Management was consulted in the drafting of the code of behaviour through drafts being sent around via email. This gives all an opportunity to study the document and then make suggestions etc at the further meetings.

- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis by providing opportunities for professional development e.g. attending courses/providing funding where possible, /providing funding for equipment required by staff to implement this policy.
- **Incidents are reported to the BOM where necessary and are discussed. Parents can be asked to a meeting with representatives of the Board – usually the Principal and Chairperson, if staff and Board feel that such a step is necessary. This is done with respect and discretion.**

Parents

‘Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.’

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

- Regular contact between parents and teachers is encouraged – parents are informed of behavioural cases – even when small, to ensure that there is worthwhile communication taking place between home and school.
- A draft of this policy was given to the Parents’ Committee and as discussed at this level. A copy was also sent home to all families and recommendations and suggestions were sought. These suggestions were then discussed and implemented as seen fit by the BOM.
- Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:
 - Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school’s system of rewards and sanctions
 - Parents ensure their children are at school in time
 - Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
 - Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
 - Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
 - Parents make every effort to speak the Irish that they have in the school setting and they support the school in the implementation of our Polasaí Labhairt na Gaeilge.
 - Parents are expected to always treat teachers and children with respect

Pupils

It is important that students have an input into their own behaviour and as a result, Coiste na nDaltaí will be elected in before the midterm break in October. All other student committees will be elected at this time also. Here, they will be able to influence the sanctions and rewards systems in place.

The students also have an active role in the ongoing implementation of this policy e.g.:

- Drafting rules for the classroom
- Taking part in assemblies
- Working on Student Council
- As part of Assembly, the students are given a chance to put forward suggestions in relation to different parts of school life e.g. Weekly Rule
- The school Rules were put together at an Assembly (see below)
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Children will also be expected to always treat all members of staff and other students with respect.

<h2>8. Positive strategies for managing behaviour</h2>
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'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place.' (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

To promote good behaviour throughout the school, a selection of strategies is used on a whole school basis.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice is a values-based philosophy; it aims to consciously build relationships, respond to harm or conflict in a way that honours relationships, and connects us to our best selves and to one another. GSBB is in the process of growing a restorative school; we are embracing and living the restorative philosophy; which is based on a shared awareness that we are all profoundly relational, interconnected and inherently good. As part of this practice, the following questions will be used to resolve conflict:

What happened?

What were you thinking of at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected and in what way?

How could things have been done differently?

What do you think needs to happen next?

Classroom

- “Ground rules”/ behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning
- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- “Golden Time” (see below)
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation (see appendix)
- Timetabling. Clear timetabling can ensure effectiveness on a teachers’ behalf and subsequently reduce time for negative behaviour.
- A hand in the air – when a teacher raises a hand, this signals “Cíúnas.” This reduces the need for teachers to raise their voices, and thus helps to create a positive, peaceful school atmosphere.
- Where there is continuous negative behaviour, especially at Junior Level, a variation of “stars” can be used i.e. the day/part of day is broken into attainable periods and during this time one behaviour is chosen e.g. sitting down. If the child manages to stay in seat for that period, a star is given. When an agreed number of stars have been given, there will be a prize given. This can be made suitable for needs of class, student and teacher.

Playground

- The school Rules are followed in the yard. Everyone must walk to the yard.
- Older students are used as “leaders” helping the younger students in their lines on the way to the yard.
- Only in the case of emergency will children be let up to the school during break.
- Games are taught at different stages throughout the year as part of the “games” strand in PE at the start of the year to ensure competency in their ability to play in Irish, which will also help discourage any negative behaviour.
- On wet days, the students are not allowed out to play. There are wide ranges of games available in every classroom that the children can play. The teacher on supervision will supervise these activities. Also, the IWB can be used as a resource during break, however, the programme must be in Irish
- Each class teacher brings their class to the door in a line. They then line up outside and walk down to the yard. When break is over, the students line up in yard and walk up in accordance to class. In the case of an accident/misbehaviour, the supervising teacher will report to the class teacher in the event of serious misbehaviour/continuing incidents etc. Where there is a breach of discipline in the yard, the student can be removed from play for a certain period and made to stand at the side.
- Yard boxes are sent out on the yard at lunch time to help encourage good behaviour and the development of social skills
- 5th and 6th class may use the Quad on a rotating basis – however this is clearly explained as a privilege and it is dependent on good behaviour (Except during building times)
- All classes from 3rd class up have specific responsibilities and these again, are looked upon as privileges.
- 6th class work with infants, 1st and 2nd class - bringing them in and out at breaktime and lunchtime

Other areas in the school

- The class teachers walk their classes to and from the door. The supervising teacher then walks all students to and from yard. This cuts out any opportunity for students being unsupervised. Due to layout of school, both toilets and cloakrooms are in classrooms, again cutting out any opportunity for children to be unsupervised.
- Teachers should always be on the lookout for good behaviour and chances to reinforce this e.g. classes behaving on corridors/students adhering to school rules etc.
- At Infant level in the school, especially from the learning support side, social skills groups and the development of strategies and skills are very important and all children are worked with in social skill groups.
- School rules are central to our assembly and they are referred to regularly
- It is expected that Irish is always the language of communication around the school, before and after school included.

9. School Rules

The school Rules were drawn up in conjunction with the students at school assembly on the 9/11/07. This is the sort of behaviour we expect from all members of our community. There are 8 simple rules and they will be hung around the school. They will be referred to at assembly.

The rules will also be in the students Homework Notebook. Parents will be given a copy of this at the registration meetings.

1) **Irish:** *We will all speak Irish at all times.*

- 2) **Manners:** *We will all be polite to everyone in school and we will not curse in any language.*
- 3) **Honesty:** *We will all tell the truth and if we see something that is not right, we will tell a teacher*
- 4) **Respect:** *We will all show respect for our school and environment by keeping it clean and we will show respect for ourselves and others by treating each other as we would like to be treated.*
- 5) **Walk:** *We will all walk inside and on the way to the yard.*
- 6) **Work:** *We will always try our best with our school and homework. We will always be on time and fully prepared for school.*
- 7) **Hand in the Air:** *When there is a hand in the air, we will stay quiet- we will listen to each other and let one person talk at a time.*
- 8) **Co-operation:** *We will all cooperate with each other and take part in school activities.*

10. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- Golden Time is used to encourage and reward good behaviour. During class time, a warning system is used. Where there is an incident of negative behaviour, a visual warning is given to the child (an unhappy face at infant level/rabhadh at senior level). This reduces need for vocal acknowledgement of incident, which can draw attention to it. If the behaviour rectifies by the next break time, the warning is removed. When this is not changed, 5 minutes of Golden Time on Friday is removed. This time needs to be very effective to encourage all students to make sure that no time is lost. Those who lose out on time will have to sit out with a timer and not participate. When their lost time is over, they can return. There are boxes of board games from 1st class up. These games are based on team-work, problem solving, social skills and oral language. All classes can bring in their own games, however no electronic games can be brought in. The school accepts no responsibility for any of these items e.g. pieces going missing, broken, etc. For the senior classes there is the choice of 'Discretionary time' in which the children can choose what activity they would like to do e.g. play sport outside. The privilege can be taken away if necessary.

Teachers use an array of rewards to encourage good behaviour at the class level. Teachers should use the Assembly to announce good behaviour, or to ask the principal to award a prize e.g. extra playtime.

- Prizes are suited to the class level. As they get older, they can also be involved in deciding what their prize may be e.g. no homework/no uniform day etc
- In the case where there is improvement in behaviour, this is announced throughout the school by being sent around the classes for example, praise at assembly, parents being informed.
- When there is a celebration of good behaviour (and everyone is encouraged to do this as often as possible) here are some examples of rewards:
 - Less homework
 - Curricular games
 - A positive note being sent to principal/home
 - Trips

- A class prize
- Work being displayed
- Praised at assembly

The representing of the school at any fixture or event is a privilege and is an honour. In the case whereby the removal of this is used as a sanction, it can only be done so after consultation with principal

11. Labhairt na Gaeilge:

- As we are a Gaelscoil, there is always huge emphasis on the importance of speaking Irish. Therefore, everyone (parents, students and staff alike) has a duty to speak as much Irish as possible when in the school environment.
- The school has a policy in relation to this and we expect all members of the school community to adhere to it.
- If a student is not abiding by this policy, the steps laid out in the Code of Behaviour will be implemented.

12. Bullying

- Please note that bullying of any sort will not be accepted in Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín, and in such a case (i.e. continuous/regular), this will be dealt with in conjunction with our Anti-bullying policy.

13. Cyberbullying

- The school recognises that once incidents of public cyberbullying constitute bullying and this will be dealt with under our bullying policy. Cyberbullying will be discussed regularly with the students and will be highlighted during the Anti-bullying week

14. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- 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 regarding the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.
- Please find below a list the strategies agreed upon by the teaching staff during the school year 2023/2024, used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour. There is also a list of sanctions which can be used based on what sort of breach is in question. The aim of these strategies is that the student will learn from the behaviour. This is positive intervention. It is of the utmost importance that all staff members adhere to them in a positive, sensible manner. All students must be dealt with in respectful manner, as through modelling good behaviour, a child can learn a lot.

(this not a complete list)

While implementing these strategies, the following points should be noted.

- 1) *All effort should be made to reduce the tension in the situation and not add to it.*
- 2) *That all parties' dignity is protected as far as is possible.*
- 3) *That they are implemented in a fair, consistent manner*
- 4) *That they are appropriate/timely.*

Céim 1	Céim 2	Céim 3
Examples of minor breach of the code of behaviour	Examples of serious breach of the code of behaviour	Examples of very serious breach of the code of behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disrupting classwork ● Running in the school ● Speaking English in school ● Leaving rubbish around school ● Telling lies ● Being on the school premises after school hours without permission ● Not wearing the school uniform correctly ● Playing rough ● Refusing to do work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuously disrupting classwork ● Bullying behaviour ● Answering back to a teacher/staff member ● Using any sort of mobile phone in school ● Using bad language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stealing ● Leaving the school premises without permission ● Brining a dangerous item into school ● Absent from school without permission “mitching” ● Putting the school in danger of fire ● Attacking, threatening, violent behaviour towards a pupil(s) or staff member ● Smoking or consuming alcohol at school ● In the possession of drugs, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes at school ● Continuous bullying behaviours ● Racism ● Purposely hurting/assaulting a pupil(s) or staff member ● Putting a pupil(s) or staff member in danger ● Refusing to follow the school’s Anti-bullying policy ● Threatening a pupil(s) or staff member
Sanctions for minor breaches of the code of behaviour	Sanctions for serious breaches of the code of behaviour	Sanctions for very serious breaches of the code of behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing by the gate on yard ● Class teacher meets with parents/ guardians informally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Note sent home in the homework journal to be signed by parents/guardians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principal sends a note home to be signed by parents/guardians ● Board of Management informed about the matter

Parents participation in the management of misbehaviour.

Parents should be kept informed in relation to issues of misbehaviour from an early stage.

Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín believes in the involvement of parents in any aspect of a student's behaviour. Therefore, there is a practice of open communication between staff and parents.

- o In the case of misbehaviour, the class teacher speaks to the parent at the end of the day – often here it is only a case of informing them that something small happened. Parents need not be informed of every single incident, but when there is a pattern or regularity emerging, it is better to do this sooner rather than later.
- o Notes of incidents should be kept by teachers on Aladdin.
- o It is usually the class teacher who is the first point of contact with parents, however, in a case of emergency, or gross misbehaviour it can happen that the principal is the first to make contact.
- o When a parent is invited to the school on a formal basis, it is important to note that the wording of notes is reflective of the school atmosphere i.e. open and respectful. Every effort should be made to provide a comfortable, private setting - usually in the classroom after school or at lunch time.
- o At this meeting, every effort should be made on both sides to listen to each other and come up with a plan to help improve behaviour.
- o Usually, in the case of an initial meeting between parent and teacher, the principal does not need to be present, but it can happen that she is asked to be present. When not present, she is to be informed of outcome. It can also happen that the Learning Support Teacher can be asked to be present also.
- o Depending on age and behaviour of child, he/she could be present too, but normally at this stage, it is teacher and parents.
- o Parents are advised to contact the school if they are worried about anything. In the case of a parent wishing to contact the school, he/she must contact class teacher first. An appointment may be made by contacting the school. Parents are reminded of this through the Newsletter and at meetings.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

Consultation with parents is made and in situations whereby this policy has been exhausted and when there is no improvement, outside bodies will be contacted e.g. NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)/HSE (Health Service Executive) etc

- NB: the Continuum of Support, as paid out by NEPS will be used in cases of concern relating behavioural difficulties
- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment.
 - Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, ...
 - Special Educational Needs (SEN) personnel may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour – Special Education Teacher (SET)/Principal/Mentors or other members of staff can be used here.
 - We are partaking in the Droichead which provides a structure for NQTs to be mentored by a more senior member of staff.
- Staff are informed of any relevant courses of professional development e.g. SPHE/Education Colleges/Centres/Prof Excel courses etc.
- If threatening or violent behaviour causes a risk to the student him/herself, or to the safety of other students or staff, parents will be contacted immediately for him/her to be taken home. There will a meeting then between the parents and teacher/principal to lay out a school support + plan. The appropriate authorities will also be contacted when necessary, e.g. Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO)/Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)/NEPS/HSE etc

NB: when a student has been accused of an incident of gross misbehaviour outside school, when said child is not under the care of the school, the Code of Discipline will not be brought into use, if it cannot be proved that there was a clear connection between the school and that it will directly impact on school work. The school can seek legal advice in this situation.

15. Suspension / Expulsion procedures

Suspension

The principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days. (Sections 21(4) a)

Parents shall be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This will always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated.'

A student may be suspended because of continuous misbehaviour or because of a gross act of misbehaviour – which would result in the following:

- It would have serious damaging effects on the education of other students
- It would threaten the safety and wellbeing of other students or teachers by him/her remaining in school
- Where a student has damaged school/staff property

The following issues should be considered when considering suspension (See pg. 74 Guidelines for Schools – NEWB)

- Type and seriousness of behaviour

- Context of Behaviour
- Effect of Behaviour
- Intervention to date e.g. monitoring/recording/consultation with NEPS/SENO/Inspectorate/EWO etc
- Is it a suitable response to suspend the student?
- Possible effects of Suspension

The suspension should facilitate the school to lay out behavioural aims with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). It should also provide the school with the opportunity to plan for further intervention and to instil upon parents and students alike the seriousness of the situation.

Types of Suspension:

a) Immediate Suspension:

In certain circumstances the principal can decide that immediate suspension is suitable where it can be shown that by the student in question remaining at that point could result in a serious threat to the safety of other students or staff members. Usual warning systems should be implemented here.

No student should ever be sent home without informing the parents first.

b) Automatic Suspension:

This can be implemented in the case whereby serious damage has been caused to school or other property, or in the case of a physical attack on a member of staff or student, or whereby the steps of the Code of Discipline (above) have been followed and this point has been reached. (Note: Suspension will not be used in the poor academic attainment/poor school attendance/tardiness or minor breaches of the school's Code.) HOWEVER, in the case of continuous misbehaviour that detracts from the learning of others or that could result in danger, it could be used.

A student should not be suspended shortly after returning from a suspension unless:

- they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and
- fair procedures are observed in full and
- the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

A parent can be asked to collect a child early from school for a particular length of time or to keep a child at home, but this should be viewed upon as suspension, and the correct procedures should be followed.

There should be a definite length of time stipulated in this situation.

When suspension is being considered, the following practice should be followed:

a) Both parent(s) and student must be informed of the complaint. Inform them in relation to the complaint, how it will be investigated and that suspension could result.

It is advised that this would be done in writing to ensure that there is an official record, but it can also be done verbally.

b) They should be afforded the opportunity to respond. This opportunity should be afforded the final decision is made. A meeting can be arranged to discuss the situation and to ask/answer questions. Failure to attend this meeting should result in the principal writing to the parents explaining the importance of the rescheduled meeting and that

failure to attend again will result in the process of suspension being followed. Notes should be kept of this meeting.

Period of Suspension:

- A student should not be suspended for a period of longer than 3 days, except in situations whereby the principal feels that a longer period is warranted to fulfil certain objectives. In such cases, this decision should be referred to the Board of Management.
- The BOM can authorise the principal, with the consent of Chairperson, to suspend a student for a period of up to 5 days, when the Board is unable to convene a meeting in the interim.
- The BOM should limit suspension to a period of 10 days for any one suspension.
- The BOM should review this when suspension would result in the student having missed more than 20 days in the current school year. This suspension is appealable under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Appeal:

The BOM should afford the opportunity of appeal when this decision has been reached by the principal. In the case that the Board has made the decision, the Patron should provide this.

When suspension results in a student missing more than 20 days (due to suspension), parents can appeal the decision under Section 29 of Education Act.

When informing of the suspension, parents/guardians must be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and this will be done in an appropriate manner.

Implementing the Suspension:

- Intent in Writing: the letter should contain the following points:
 - Length of Suspension, including date of commencement and cessation.
 - Study programme to follow (if appropriate)
 - Arrangements for returning to school and that a commitment from both parents and student will be undertaken to improve behaviour.
 - Opportunity to appeal to the Board of Management.
 - Right to appeal to the DES
 - The EWO is informed.

The suspension can be terminated if the BOM so decides or if so directed by the Secretary of the DES.

On returning to school, a plan of behaviour should be in place to help him/her catch up on work lost. When a term of suspension comes to an end, the student should return to school with a clean slate. It should be discussed prior to return, what is expected from everyone involved on his/her return (student, parent(s), guardian(s) and staff)

Recording and Reporting:

Formal, written records should be kept on:

- The investigation (and notes on all interviews)
- The decision and reasoning of said decision
- Length and conditions of suspension.

- The principal must report to the BOM in relation to all suspensions.
- The principal has a duty to report suspensions to the NEWB (Ed. Welfare Act 2000. Section 21(4)(a) - standard forms available on www.newb.ie/

The BOM will review the use of suspension on a regular basis to ensure proper use of the policy.

Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

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

Expulsion is a serious step. The school must ensure that all efforts have made to deal with the misbehaviour and to avoid this outcome e.g.

- Meeting with parents and student to discuss possible ways to improve behaviour
- Meeting with parents and student to discuss possible consequences if behaviour does not change
- To ensure that every effort has been made to try all options
- Help from outside agencies has been sought e.g. NEPS/HSE/SESS (Special Education Support Service) etc
- Expulsion can be as a result in the following circumstances – even when they are first circumstance of gross misbehaviour

*Serious threat of violence to another student or member of staff

*Violence or physical attack

*Providing illegal drugs to students in school

*Sexual assault

- Arson/attempted arson
- Malicious damage to school property/ransacking

(this is not a complete list!)

Code of Practice in Expulsion (see pg. 86 Guidelines for Schools):

- Detailed investigation under supervision of Principal: *Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) informed alleged misbehaviour, the process of investigation that will be carried out and that expulsion may result.*
- *Every opportunity should be afforded to parents and student to reply to these complaints of serious misbehaviour before this decision will be taken.*
- *They will be informed in writing to ensure that there is a permanent record on*
- *Where expulsion could result, a meeting must be held – this provides an opportunity for any questions to be asked and to give their side.*

- *Failure to attend meeting by parents and student, will result in the principal writing to them, relaying to them the importance of the rescheduled meeting and the seriousness of the situation and that failure to attend the next meeting, will result in the BOM having to make decision to deal with behaviour without their input. A copy of these letters and answers will be kept by the school.*

- Recommendation by Principal to the BOM:

- When the principal is of the opinion that expulsion is the necessary sanction, she will report this to the Board. The principal shall:
 - *Inform parents and student that a request to the Board has been made in relation to expulsion.*
 - *Ensure that the parents have a record of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and a copy of the written notification of the request to the Board.*
 - *Give a copy of the comprehensive reports, given to the parents, to the Board.*
 - *Inform parents of date of hearing being organised by the BOM and invite them to attend this hearing.*
 - *Advise parents that they can make written and/or oral submissions to the Board.*
 - *Ensure that sufficient notification be given to parents of meeting to ensure parents can prepare.*

- Judgement of Board on Principal's recommendation and organisation of hearing:

- *A review must be carried out on the investigation and it must be ensured that this investigation was carried out with due care.*
- *Review will be carried out on all documentation and all relevant issues.*
- *The Board will ensure that there is no-one involved in the decision-making process who was/is involved in the case*
- *When the decision to expel has been made a hearing will be organised. When this happens, the principal and parents can make their cases to the board, in front of each other. At this point, they can question each other's evidence.*
- *The Board has a duty to ensure that it is unbiased.*
- *After the hearing, the Board will make its decision – without either parent or Principal present.*

- Judgement of Board and actions after hearing:

The Board must make its decision at this point.

When the Board decides to expel the student, the EWO must be notified in writing of it and of the reasons (Ed. Welfare Act 200- a24(1)) The student cannot be expelled until a period of 20 days has passed of receipt of notification in writing by the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer).

Appeals will automatically be upheld under section 20 when it can be shown that the EWO was not informed or if 20 days has not passed since the date the EWO was notified and the expulsion instigated.

The Board should inform parents in writing of the next steps in the process – they should be informed at this point that the EWO has been informed.

- Consultation with EWO:

- Within 20 days of receipt of notification the EWO must:
 - Make every reasonable effort to have an individual consultation with the principal, parents and anyone else as necessary.
 - Organise a meeting between the parties who agree to be present.
 - When a student cannot be accepted back into the school, those involved should come together with the EWO and plan towards the educational future of the student
 - The Board can decide at this stage that the student be suspended during the procedures to ensure that the safety of staff and students is ensured.
- Confirmation of a pupil's expulsion
 - *If, after the 20 days of notification to the EWO, the Board still feels that expulsion is the necessary sanction, the BOM will inform in writing the decision to uphold the expulsion.*
 - *Parents will be informed immediately.*
 - *They will be informed of their right to appeal – the standardised form will be given and records will be kept.*

Appeals

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

- Parents will be informed of the right to appeal in writing, when final decision is being passed on. They will be informed that a copy of Circular 22/02 and the standardised form can be received from the office if so required.

16. Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records are kept in a factual and impartial manner

Class level

- All teachers keep a note of unacceptable behaviour on Aladdin. If a meeting is held between parents and teacher, short, concise notes (more detailed if necessary) shall be kept. In cases of improvement, a note should be made of this too.
- The principal should be informed in the case of continuing behavioural issues or in the case of gross breach of discipline.

Playground

- In cases of continuing misbehaviour or serious breach of discipline, the class teacher will be informed by the teacher on yard.

17. Reference to other Policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying

- o Enrolment
- o Polasaí Labhairt na Gaeilge
- o School Ethos
- o Health & Safety

18. Success Criteria

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- That Irish is heard as the language of communication throughout the school

19. Roles and Responsibility

- The Board has a responsibility in ensuring that there is a safe, comfortable environment in the school for staff and students.
- The Board will support the principal and staff in implementing this policy.
- The Board has a role in ratifying this policy.
- The principal will have a leading role in the school in implementing this policy, however the staff has a central responsibility in its implementation.
- The principal and middle management will monitor and coordinate the implementation of this policy.
- Students will have a role in managing their own behaviour by abiding by school rules and helping to create a positive school environment.
- Parents have a role in the management of their children’s behaviour (as previously outlined).

20. Implementation Date

This plan will be implemented from the 7/1/09.

21. Timetable for Review

This was reviewed in the school year 2023/2024 and will be reviewed again in 2024/25

22. Ratification & Communication

The Board of Management ratified the amendments at the September meeting on *TBC*

It was then communicated to all parents via Newsletter and the updated version was published on school website.

Chairperson’s signatory: _____

Date: _____

