

## Introductory Statement

The Code of Behaviour for Scoil Eoin Naofa was formulated during the school year 2009-2010. Each child coming to school has a right to expect an atmosphere where he/ she can learn. The Code of Behaviour which was drawn up by the Principal and teaching staff in consultation with the Board of Management and Parent Association sets out to ensure this.

## Rationale

The need for the policy arises from the school's concern

- To promote learning and positive behaviour throughout the school as well as to provide a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour by all members of the school community.
- To ensure that every reasonable effort is made to accommodate the individuality of each pupil while acknowledging the right of each pupil to education in a disruption- free environment
- 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. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
  - *To set out 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*

## Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

In the school we treat all children with respect and dignity. The Christian ethos of the school is the principal factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. The school sees itself as a community working to develop a strong sense of cooperation among staff, parents and pupils and we are agreed that the school's focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour. Discipline encompasses every aspect of school life. Positive attitudes towards homework, punctuality, wearing of the uniform, litter and respect for others is all important.

The school needs the support of parents in order to provide an atmosphere within the school, which is conducive to the holistic education of the child. Parents have primary responsibility regarding the management of their child's behaviour.

Overall responsibility for behaviour management within the school rests with the principal, subject to the authority of the school management and dependent on the support of the parents.

## Aims

- to facilitate the education and development of every children.
- to allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- to achieve a safe environment for all within the school
- to enable teachers to teach without disruption
- to create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- to foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, at the same time recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- 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 throughout the school

### 1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify *“the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school”*. In accordance with Circular 20/90 the school adheres to the recommendation in promoting a positive school ethos based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the way in which pupils and teachers treat each other.

*The school believes that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, and between staff, pupils and parents.*

*The school emphasises communicating, thinking about and discussing behaviour-with individuals and groups- to help solve problems.*

*Each teacher has responsibility for behaviour management on school premises within his/ her own classes and working groups. All staff members have a copy of the code in their classrooms which is made available to any teacher who replaces them at any time during the year.*

*The code will be reviewed on an annual basis and more informally on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that it continues to facilitate the teaching and learning in the school.*

In conjunction with the learning support/resource/ class specific teacher specific adjustments may need to be made to the code for a pupil with special needs or with a known, diagnosed behavioural difficulty. The parents of the pupil will be informed of any change. These are only warranted where it is felt that the best interests of the pupils are at stake. Every effort will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil.

Where a child has special needs, and with the support and consent of parents, help will be sought from outside agencies. These include:

The National Education Psychological Service

The Education Welfare Board

The Midland Health Board and any other relevant agency that might provide appropriate support.

While the needs of an individual child will be addressed in so far as resources will allow, in the case of very serious behaviour management problems due account will also be taken of the needs of the other children and of school staff.

In such situations the help and support of the parents will be sought consistently. Where help is not forthcoming then the help of social or mediation services will be sought.

The SPHE programme and Circle Time are also used to support the code of behaviour.

The establishment of circles of discussion is an ongoing feature of classroom life. This 'circle time' raises awareness of issues that arise in the classroom and in the yard. This time can be used to teach and re-teach our values and rules, and to emphasise the skills necessary for helping us to maintain them, ie Listening, speaking, looking, concentrating. Circle time discussions will provide opportunities for children and staff to make positive suggestions to help everyone maintain our agreed values/rules; they will be challenging but positive and supportive.

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.

## **2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

**Board of Management**

'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in the school. It should be supportive of the Principal in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline in the school' (Circular 20/90). The Board acknowledges its duty of care for the children attending the school. It is

aware of its obligations for all members of the school community under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005). The Principal brings to the attention of the Board issues relating to the policy and enlists their support and advice at all times. The Board supports the staff in implementing the code in that they are willing to provide funding for training of staff and resources for the effective implementation of the code.

### Staff

Teachers and other staff members play important roles in the work in the review and updating of the code. They bring to this work their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning; their experience of what works to help students to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community (p. 16 NEWB Guidelines)

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help 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.

### Parents

Schools need the support of Parents in order to meet the legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline. Therefore parents are consulted in relation to the code at parent association meetings. The parent association is also requested to support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour through the donation of prizes and trophies. Co-operation between staff and parents is encouraged whereby the school aims that both parents and teachers treat each other with respect;

- that the school is a safe and welcoming environment for parents
- that they can obtain recognition of individual difference among pupils having due regard for the resources available
- that they can communicate with teachers on matters of mutual concern and interest
- that they can contact the school at an early stage to discuss problems and difficulties
- receive information on school policies and procedures
- receive progress reports in accordance with agreed school policies
- That they are aware of the correct channels to make a complaint as set out in the school's Complaint Procedures.

The school seeks the support of parents in

- cooperating with the school's systems of rewards and sanctions
- in ensuring that children are brought to school for the correct times
- that parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work

- that they attend meetings in the school if requested
- help children with their homework and ensure that it is completed
- ensure that their children have the necessary books and materials for school
- 'Prior to registering a child each parent will be required to confirm in writing, that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make reasonable effort to ensure compliance with such code by the child' (The Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 23)
- Where there is persistent poor behaviour by pupils, parents will be notified by class teacher / Principal about the child's behaviour. A meeting will be arranged. Every effort will be made to respect concerns of all parents involved.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns and make an arrangement to meet with the class teacher / principal to discuss their concerns.
- The Parent Association are encouraged to organise talks or workshops on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development for parents.

## **Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour**

The school aims to manage challenging behaviour by preventing it occurring in the first place.

The code is encompassed in the following three 'golden rules' or values. The values that we seek to teach are consistent with the Catholic ethos of our school.

### **Respect myself**

Respect others

Respect property.

The school values are enshrined in the following list of rules which are taught using the following rhyme. These are displayed in every classroom and are taken from the 'Discipline for Learning ' programme.

- Be silent when asked, whisper at a task, talk when allowed but never out loud. I will listen; I will not interrupt; I will let others speak; I will not use bad language or call names.
- Be where you should, move as you should.

I will sit on my chair when requested to do so and do my work well; I will always walk and never run; I will stay in my place if my teacher is out of the room; I will walk quietly in my line to and from the yard; I will be gentle; I will not push or shove in the line; I will let adults pass

➤ **Time ; use it, Don't lose it**

**I will work hard -I will not waste time; I will do my homework; I will sit on my chair when requested to do so and do my work well.**

➤ **In all you say and in all you do, treat grown – ups as you ought to do.**

**I will be honest – I will not hide the truth; I will be kind and helpful – I will not hurt people's feelings; I will not use bad language or call names; I will be fair; I will not tell silly tales; I will let adults pass.**

➤ **Bully not, share a lot. Give back what you got.**

**I will be gentle – I will not hurt anyone; I will look after property – I will not waste or damage things; I will let others join in my games.**

➤ **A clean and tidy, litter free school is Scoil Eoin Naofa's golden rule.**

**I will look after property – I will not waste or damage things; I will use the toilet properly and wash my hands; I will help to keep a tidy classroom.**

**A list of Specific Classroom Rules are displayed in each classroom. These may be as follows or similar set devised by the class itself.**

➤ **I will sit on my chair when requested to do so and do my work well.**

➤ **I will listen. I will let others speak.**

➤ **I will always walk and never run.**

➤ **I will help to keep a tidy classroom.**

➤ **I will use the toilet properly and wash my hands.**

➤ **I will be kind and helpful and not hurt other people's feelings.**

➤ **I will stay in my place if the teacher is out of the room.**

## **Playground**

**The following are the rules set out for the playground.**

**1) I will walk quietly in my line to and from both yards**

**2) I will go to the toilet and put on my coat before going out to the yard.**

**3) I will let others join in my games.**

**4) I will be gentle. I will not push, kick or punch.**

**5) I will not use bad language or call names.**

**6) I will be fair. I will not tell silly tales.**

**7) I will let others join in my games.**

**8) I will ask teacher on yard duty's permission to re-enter the school during play time.**

**9) I will do as I am told at all times.**

**10)I will not leave the school premises without permission.**

**I will walk quietly to my classroom when I am told.**

**The yard rules are displayed in each classroom and in school corridor**

**At various times during the school year but especially at the beginning of the school year / school term the children are asked to discuss the rules and to decide why they are important. Each class is also encouraged to add a rule or to discuss issues that might prevent the effective implementation of a rule. Any decisions or concerns are brought to the attention of the school principal who will pursue the concern further if necessary.**

### **Yard Supervision;**

**A yard supervision rota is set out each month and each class teacher is given a copy. SNA support is also available. Prior to coming to the yard children go to the toilet, check that their shoelaces are tied and that they are wearing their coats and jackets on cold days. Two teachers are on duty at each break. This provides adequate supervision for both the front and back of the school and ensures that all children are visible. In order to facilitate teachers to have a lunch the lunchtime break is broken into two sessions. Two teachers supervise for the first fifteen minutes with two other teachers taking over for the second half. Teachers on yard have yard books which they use to record children who ask to go to the toilet or get some lunch. Names of pupils are recorded and teacher gives the child a card which they give back to the teacher on duty on their return to the yard. The teacher on duty also records the names of children who get a warning or are sent to the exclusion zone. The teacher supervising the front yard will regularly check indoor area of the school during the break. Children who need to use the toilet during playtime or to return to their classroom to get or leave an item, during break time must always ask permission. In the front and back there is a special area which is the "Exclusion Zone". Children who misbehave during playtime will be sent to this area. Children who engage in very serious behaviour are sent directly to the principal and their class teacher is also informed of such when he / she comes to collect their class from the yard. A record of the names of children who get warnings and the reason for the warning is maintained and checked each month. If a pupils receives five warnings their parents are contacted to discuss how best to help the child. Children who need extra support are rewarded at the end of each week with notes of recommendation being sent home. Deputy Principal is responsible for this. SNA is on duty for every break. Teachers also note pupils who are playing well and monitor behaviour so that decisions can be made (Croke Park Hour) on how to maintain positive behaviour in the school at all times.**

**Children who are injured are sent to kitchen area where they will be looked after. They remain under supervision until break ends. A second / third child will be invited to remain with the child inside to play with them. All major injuries are recorded in the accident book.**

**Children are encouraged to play games many of which are taught at P.E. Time. Specific areas are allocated for basketball, football, softball games and hopscotch.**

To ensure the safety of pupils and minimise the risk of misbehaviour and to ensure that there is an equal number of pupils playing in the front and back yard. Infants Rang I, II, play at the front of the school. Rang III, IV, V, VI play at the back of the school. Children are encouraged not to play on grass areas during periods of heavy rainfall.

As part of our Active Flag markings have been drawn in the school yard to help promote playing of games and to allow for optimum use of the spaces available. Children have a range of skipping ropes, soft balls for tarmac area and hoola hoops to play with. Lists of games ideas are available for the children to use. Pupils from Rang V and VI act as buddies for the younger children in the yard organising and teaching games to them. Two to three pupils from Rang V and Rang VI play with the younger children for the first fifteen minutes of lunch break.

Children who are well behaved/helpful/kind to another child or help pick up litter during the breaktime are awarded a leaf on the tree. Children who have their names on a leaf on the tree are given a lucky dip at the monthly assembly. Teachers write a commendation on the leaf explaining why the child has received a leaf and this is read out at assembly.

### **Wet days**

Each day the children are permitted to eat their lunches in the classroom. However each classroom is to be vacated by 12.40pm. Children then play in the yard for the duration of playtime. The same classroom / playground rules apply to this time. On wet days the classes are supervised by the teachers on duty until 12.40p.m. At this time all teachers return to their class and supervise their own individual class until break ends. During this time children are given a choice of indoor activities to do. Each class teacher assumes responsibility that there is a range of games suited to the class level available for wet days.

### **Leaving / Returning to Classrooms.**

At each bell for break time, children line up in an orderly way and on a signal from the class teacher leave their classroom in an orderly manner. At the end of break time the children once the bell is rang, line up in their designated area and wait to be instructed to return to their classrooms in an orderly manner. Pushing, fighting, running or any other inappropriate behaviour will be noted and sanctions will be given. The best line from the senior classes and from the junior classes is awarded a merit sticker. at the end of each break time. At the end of the week the class grouping with the most stickers is named on a chart. The class with the most stickers at the end of term receives a small reward. Children who choose to break the "Yard Rules" during the line up routine can be asked to stand in a separate line / exclusion zone. They remain there until their teacher comes to collect them for class. A classroom sanction will be given. A daily behaviour record is kept of misbehaviours and the names of children are reviewed on a monthly basis. These same rules apply to children who have to leave class during school time to go to the toilet or on an errand. Children who are helpful/ pick up litter, encourage others to play / join in games may be awarded points stars/leaf on tree 'Caught you being Good'.

## **Extrinsic Rewards and Sanctions**

Rewards are at the discretion of the teacher, and are kept in an appropriate place in classrooms in the belief that each person has an innate capacity for self-discipline. Sanctions show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

### **Sanctions for the yard;**

- I will get a warning
- I will stand out in the exclusion zone until I am ready to behave well.
- I will get a bad behaviour mark and my class teacher will be told
- A sanction from class list will be imposed.
- My name will be entered into the yard book. A monthly behaviour record is kept of misbehaviours and where there are concerns of repeated poor behaviour by a child, parents will be notified. In situations where the teacher believes a child can manage him/ herself the incident may or may not be noted. In such instances parents will not be notified. In cases where there is a repeated incident a record of improvements in behaviour will be kept.

### **Rewards;**

Each class lines up in their class grouping. At the end of each break a class group is awarded a sticker for being the best behaved. At the end of the week/month the group with the most stickers receives a trophy/rosette to be put on display in their classroom or on notice board in the corridor for the coming week/month.

Children who behave well are praised and their class teacher is told. They can receive a card on which is written a list of commendable behaviours. They can show this to their class teacher and receive a suitable reward. This can be placed in their homework journal to be shown to their parents / guardians for their approval too,

When there is a row / dispute in the school yard it is recorded in yard book and reported to class teacher of pupils concerned. The class teacher may find this a good opportunity to deliver rules and to discuss issues. She / he may ask children to give / write their own account of the events. This may be worthwhile in order to encourage the children to reflect on their own behaviour and the impact that negative behaviour can have on other children, on the class and on the game being played.

## **School related activities;**

Children are expected to keep school rules in all school related activities eg. school tours, football matches attending school Masses, nature walks etc. Where there are concerns about a pupil's poor behaviour and the likely consequence of such behaviour on the safety of pupils, these pupils may not be allowed to participate in out of school activities.

In all of out of school activities children are therefore expected

- ❖ To be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
- ❖ To show respect for property.
- ❖ To obey their teachers, helpers who help with such events and to show respect to all adults.

## **Rewards and Sanctions**

The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. The following are some of the strategies which will be used to manage behaviour in the classroom e.g.

- List of rules displayed in each classroom and are referred to on a regular basis Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave, that it is important to ' respect myself ',respect others and respect property
- In line with the code and taking into consideration the needs and age of pupils in the different ages pupil input is encouraged in reviewing/devising the class rules. This is done through group work, teacher guided activities and whole class work.
- Each teacher is encouraged to adopt classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation to behave well. (All teachers have copies of How to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Competence by Carolyn Webster-Stratton)
- Two staff members have completed inservice training based on the book listed above
- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and pupils.
- Good school and class routines.
- Clear boundaries and rules for students
- Helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour.
- Recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour.
- Exploring with students how people should treat each other.

In conjunction with the SPHE programme and “Circle Time” teachers support the children to implement the rules through active learning. They are encouraged to participate in learning the rules, in exploring why we need rules and in making decisions in relation to rewards and sanctions. This is done through group work teacher guided activities and whole class work. The children are encouraged to take increased responsibility, to make the rules their own and to understand the need for good rules which help to develop fully our own talents but to also work as a social unit where they learn from and with each other. Drama activities, co – operative games, the use of pictures, photographs and visual images, class discussion, written activities, the use of media and information and communication technologies, looking at children's own work are other strategies that teachers may use for active learning.

## **Strategies**

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following;

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- ❖ A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- ❖ Tree of praise
- ❖ Use of positive booklet where behaviour is noted and after each day when a pupil has not broken this particular promise they receive a merit sticker.

Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows;

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

- Reasoning with pupils
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Prescribing extra work.
- Communication with Parents. Pupils and parents/guardians are also informed when a formal record will be is being kept of their child's behaviour.
- Temporary separation from peers and / or loss of privileges.
- Detention during break for a specific number of minutes
- Additional work with due care that it is appropriate
- Referral to Principal / Deputy Principal.
- Communication with Parents

- **Support of outside agencies. Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for assessment without delay and help will be sought from services in the wider community e.g counselling.**
- **A card on which there are written printed statements about poor behaviour is given to the child (see copy at end of policy). The appropriate behaviour is ticked and pupil is sent with card to the principal who keeps the card on file. Where there is continuous poor behaviour the card may also be sent home for parent's signatures.**
- **Write out copy of school rules or relevant rule to upper limit of 20/50 times**
- **For gross misbehaviour, or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered in line with the terms of Department circular 7/88 and 1/91 (in accordance with Rule 130 of the rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88).**
- **Serious misbehaviour for example would be aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards an adult or another child.**
- **In instances where parents are invited to meet the manager or principal and do not give an undertaking that their child will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period.**
- **In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Management Authority shall empower the principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.**
- **Expulsion will only be considered only after every effort at rehabilitation has failed and every sanction exhausted. In taking such a course the Board of Management will consider the rights of the child in question. It will seek to ensure the rights of the other children in the class are considered. It must also consider the Health Safety and Welfare of the staff.**

## **Procedures**

**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 with regard to the gravity / frequency of such misdemeanours, as follows; When a child repeatedly undermines school values, or for more serious misbehaviours, the following process of mediation will be observed-**

- 1. An explanation will be sought for what happened**
- 2. The person will be listened to carefully**
- 3. The person will be asked to listen to the other point of view**
- 4. Clarifications will be sought and given if necessary**
- 5. The person will be asked to acknowledge the breach and accept responsibility**
- 6. If necessary an apology will be sought and given**
- 7. The injured part will be asked to forgive**

## **8. People will be reconciled**

Scoil Eoin Naofa promotes mediation as a very proactive approach to helping pupils resolve issues around conflict. Children with special education needs are supported with social skills programmes and are spoken to by both class teacher and resource teacher to help resolve difficulties and to find ways to promote more positive behaviour.

### **Examples of minor misdemeanours**

**Interrupting teacher/ Interrupting other pupils/ Thumping pupils/ Wandering about classroom/ Fidgeting/ Inattention/Wasting time deliberately/ Using bad language/ Eating in class/ Slovenly work/ Sulking/ Misbehaviour in teacher's absence/**

**Book/copies left at home/ Running in corridor/ Climbing walls/gates/ Pushing in line. Complete list attached to end of Policy.**

**Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours;**

- **Verbal reprimand / reasoning with pupil / name on board / awarding a black mark.**
- **Noting instance of yard misbehaviour in yard book**
- **Teachers may use this time to reinforce class/yard rules or to use circle time /SPHE programme to teach desired behaviours when conflict arises.**

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours**

- **Phase 1 (within the classroom)**
- **Write story of what happened or one copy of school rules or relevant rule to upper limit of 20 /50 times – to be signed by parents.**
- **Time out to cool down. Encouraging the child to reflect on their behaviour and its impact. Acknowledging/Rewarding the pupil who admits to their mistake.**
- **Note in homework journal to be signed by parent. This can be proactive in that it can recognise the fact that the child had apologised for their poor behaviour.**
- **Temporary separation from peers. Pupils may be given a prior warning that if the behaviour does not improve they will be asked to move away from peers.**
- **Sending to another teacher / denial of participation in some class activity. The child involved having being given a warning and a choice whether to or not to continue with the offending activity.**

- **Warning to pupils whose names appear in yard book more than three times. Note to parents concerning further misbehaviour in yard. (Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self / other pupil at risk.**
- **Phase 2**
- **Send to D-Principal**
- **Send to Principal**
- **Class teacher meets one / both parents**
- **Principal D/ Principal meets one / both parents concerning yard behaviour**

### **Examples of serious misdemeanours**

**Constantly disruptive in class / being cheeky/ telling lies / stealing / damaging other pupil's property / bullying / back answering a teacher / frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission / kicking/ fighting/ spitting/ deliberate disobedience / throwing objects/ abusing property/ not working to full potential / using unacceptable language / deliberately injuring a fellow pupil / endangering self / fellow pupils in the school yard at break time.**

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours;**

- **Send to D – Principal**
- **Send to Principal**
- **Principal sends note in journal to be signed by parent.**
- **Principal meets with one / both parents**
- **Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with chairperson and Principal.**

### **Examples of Gross Misdemeanours**

**Setting fire to school property / deliberately leaving taps / fire hose turned on.**

**Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher / pupil/ kicking / hitting teachers/ serious theft/ crossing school boundary / bringing dangerous objects to school.**

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours**

- (1) **Chairperson / Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents.**
- (2) **Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) i.e.**

**“No pupil can be struck off the roles for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality”.**

It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only; it is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps. At any time if parents have concerns about their child's behaviour they are welcomed to contact the school to discuss the issue

### **Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school.**

The school requests that parents notify the school of the reason for their child's absence from school. This can be done by a phone call to the secretary or by a written note to the class teacher. Children who return to school from an absence should bring a note explaining their absence if the school hasn't otherwise been informed. Where the school receives no note after the first three day of absence a call will be made to the family by the secretary.

Parents are made aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications. (see appendix at end of policy)

### **Protocol for challenging Children**

1. Teacher seeks a solution through various strategies within classroom context e.g.

Rewards

Catch child when good

Bringing attention to positive behaviour in the yard in class at assembly time.

Being specific about inappropriate behaviour

Putting sanctions in place e.g. loss of privileges, loss of golden time, time out also used.

Circle time, if appropriate

2. Teacher may look for advise to others; colleagues / principals/ psychologist .
3. Programme for behaviour to be devised ie. individual behaviour programme. (Continuum of Support Guidelines)
4. Parents / Guardians contacted and involved, this is crucial to effectiveness of working as a team.
5. Regular meetings/ reviews established, notebook with daily communication.
6. Teacher is requested to record behaviour daily so as to make a detailed evaluation.
7. Parents/ Guardians are requested to seek an appointment with Child Guidance. A letter of referral is required for this from their GP.
8. Psychological educational assessment may be sought and if appropriate resource hours with Special Needs Teacher will be recommended..
9. The Principal in consultation with the Teacher, Psychologist and D.E.S. Inspector may look for a Special Needs Assistant for the child.

10. In extreme cases where the education of the other children in class is being adversely affected or their emotional welfare is suffering then, in consultation with Class Teacher and other staff involved with child, a decision will be taken by the Principal to shorten the child's day. By so doing it is hoped that the time spent in school will be within the limits of what the child can cope with and at the same time allows the other children a time during which their needs may be focused on by teachers.
11. Having worked through the above steps and where it is felt by the Board of Management that they have explored all other options (in consultation with Principal and Teaching Staff, D.E.S. Inspector and Psychologist ) a decision may be taken to seek a placement in another school deemed more appropriate to meeting the educational, emotional, psychological and language needs of the child

### **Success Criteria.**

The following are the criteria to assess the quality and effectiveness of the code of discipline.

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- A positive school environment where teaching and learning are continually improving.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The Board of Management are aware of the content of the code and support the work of the teachers when possible.

- All teachers are responsible for the implementation of the code .
- Parents are aware of the code and their help and support is sought in guaranteeing the effectiveness of the code.

The policy is reviewed regularly at each staff meeting to ensure that it continues to support the work of pupils and teachers in the school.

## **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.

Circular 20 / 90 states that “Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with Principal Teacher and / or class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated”.

Before a suspension is considered the school unless already authorised the Principal will meet with the BOM and investigate the reasons for the suspension. A list of factors to consider before suspending a student NEWB 2008 will be used (Appendix 2)

Students and parents are informed in writing or by phone about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension.

- ❖ Parents and students are then given an opportunity to respond, this could be a meeting where parents and students involved can give their side of the story. This meeting is set up by Principal. Where the parents fail to attend a meeting the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter and a second meeting will be re-scheduled. All invitations and parent’s responses are recorded.
- ❖ If for reasons of the safety of the student other students or staff, an immediate suspension may be warranted. Parents will be notified and arrangements made for the collection of the student. The period for suspension may be up to three days. In exceptional circumstances it may need to be extended.
- ❖ If in consultation with the BOM a pupil is suspended the Principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter in line with NEWB recommendation will confirm the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- ❖ The reason for the suspension
- ❖ Any study programme to be followed.
- ❖ The arrangements for returning to school
- ❖ The provision for an appeal to the BOM
- ❖ The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.
- ❖ In line with NEWB recommendation formal written records will be kept.

## **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.**

### **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 should not be delegated.**

### **The grounds for expulsion**

**Expulsion should 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 misbehaviour 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 behaviour**
- ❖ 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 assistances of support agencies (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)**

**A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that :**

- ❖ The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.**
- ❖ The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety**
- ❖ The student is responsible for serious damage to property.**

**The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.**

### **Automatic expulsion**

**A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.**

### **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 could include:

- ❖ **A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff**
- ❖ **Actual violence or physical assault**
- ❖ **Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school**
- ❖ **Sexual assault**

### **Appendix**

**Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student (NEWB Guidelines)**

**The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- ❖ **What is the precise description of the behaviour?**
- ❖ **How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?**
- ❖ **Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?**

**The context of the behaviour**

- ❖ **What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group (Complaints Procedure)?**
- ❖ **What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviours (e.g. bullying see Anti Bullying Policy) cultural or family factors)?**
- ❖ **Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?**

**The impact of the behaviour**

- ❖ **How are other students and staff affected by the students behaviour?**
- ❖ **What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?**

**The interventions tried to date**

- ❖ **What interventions have been tried? Over what period?**
- ❖ **How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?**
- ❖ **What has been the result of these interventions?**
- ❖ **Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?**
- ❖ **Has the intervention on NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?**

- ❖ Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- ❖ Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- ❖ Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

#### **Whether expulsion is a proportionate response**

- ❖ Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- ❖ Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

#### **The possible impact of expulsion**

- ❖ To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- ❖ Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- ❖ In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

#### **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 (see 10.3 and 10.4 for information

about fair procedures). 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 Principals 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

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision making body in relation to expulsions.

It is a matter for each Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

**Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.**

**In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal should;**

- ❖ **Inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.**
- ❖ **Give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.**

**Parents should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.**

**Parents and the student must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents is essential. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.**

**If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to parents and their response.**

**Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.**

**Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should;**

- ❖ **Inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.**
- ❖ **Ensure that parents have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.**
- ❖ **Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents.**
- ❖ **Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.**
- ❖ **Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management**

- ❖ **Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.**

**Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.**

**It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student)**

**Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.**

**After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.**

**Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.**

**Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.**

**Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.(Education Welfare Act 2000) The board of Management should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education Welfare) Act 2000.**

**An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions)Act 2007**

The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

#### **Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.**

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- ❖ Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- ❖ Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend. (Education (Welfare Act 2000)

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities.

In the interest of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Educational (Welfare) Act 2000). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

#### **Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel;**

Where the twenty- day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

### **12.5 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.**

**If the student is attending a school established or maintained by a VEC, the appeal must be made in the first instance to the VEC. Where an appeal to the VEC has been concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.**

#### **The appeal process**

**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 Science). For further details about the appeals process, including requirements for documentation and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.**

#### **12.6 Review of use of expulsion**

**The Board of Management should 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.**