

# **SCOIL NA CORÓINE MHUIRE - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

## **Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí**

### **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

This policy is a collaboration between the Staff, Parents, and Board of Management of Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire, Ashford, Co. Wicklow. It was reviewed and reformulated in April 2005 and further updated in September 2010 in the light of “Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools” as drawn up by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).

### **RATIONALE**

Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire decided to review its Code of Behaviour at this time because

- The existing policy is due for review and amendment
- It is a requirement of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and the aforementioned guidelines.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

The purpose of this policy is to promote positive student behaviour and to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. It is also to enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development. It relates to the ethos of the school in that it nurtures each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. This is achieved by a high level of respect and co-operation between staff, board of management, parents and pupils. All school staff including part-time coaches/workers will be made aware of the Code. The Code takes into consideration the environment of the school – The Catholic tradition, views of the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and pupils of all diversities. It is anticipated that everyone will commit to the code and while the school understands that families have their own parenting styles and values, the home and school are two different environments and the Code of Behaviour must be respected in the school environment

### **AIMS**

- 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 enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair manner
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.

### **GUIDELINES**

- A strong sense of community and co-operation is required from staff, pupils and parents to implement the code.
- There is recognition of the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences, with reference to the safety and due consideration of others in the immediate environment.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR**

- Each child must be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults.
- Each child must show respect for the property of the school, other children's belongings and their own belongings.
- Each child is expected to do his best both in school and for homework
- I-pods and electronic games/devices must not be brought to school. If it is felt that a child needs his/her mobile phone for contact after school, it can be left in the principal's office to be collected at home time. No phones are allowed in classrooms. (see Mobile Phone policy)

## **ATTENDANCE**

Each child must attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual. When a child is absent, parents are expected to send in a note to the class teacher giving reasons for the child's absence. If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. In the event of a child missing 20 days from school parents will be informed of this in writing.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM**

All staff share our school ethos, which emphasises care, respect and responsibility and will display a shared understanding of the Code of Behaviour to promote consistency in its implementation. We will adhere to the following strategies:

- Developing clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children. Each class will draw up five to seven rules stated in terms of observable behaviours. Staff treat pupils with respect and build up positive relationships with them.
- Children are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur consequences.
- Behavioural problems are noticed and dealt with as soon as possible.
- We acknowledge positive behaviour through the use of a note in the homework journal, by praising/commending children on their behaviour and by rewarding them. Rewards include, stars, stickers, homework passes, and class rewards such as extra break and chess/board games
- Staff encompass a welcoming attitude to parents and consult with them where necessary/beneficial.
- We regularly have school assemblies where success and exemplary behaviour is acknowledged, rewarded and celebrated.
- Teachers ensure that the class timetable is as varied as possible and present a balanced educational programme for the pupils.
- Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills.

## **SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS FOR PUPILS**

The following outline of procedures for the classroom, yard and school environment set a positive atmosphere in relation to pupil learning, behaviour and achievement. There is a greater emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions.

### **Mornings:**

- Pupils should be in school by 9.20a.m. at the latest.
- The school uniform consists of a sky blue polo shirt, a navy jumper/sweat shirt and a navy trousers/skirt. On PE days a navy tracksuit should be worn with runners. Please ensure the track suit bottoms are plain navy and not branded. All parts of uniform should be clearly marked with child's name.
- If a pupil cycles to school the bicycle should be locked, and parked outside the principal's office. Pupils may not cycle within the school grounds. No pupil may touch a bicycle belonging to another child. Helmets should be worn by all cyclists.

### **At Break Times:**

- Children are encouraged to play games, such as football, when on the grass.
- Rough play, swinging off basketball hoops and climbing walls/ fences is not allowed.
- Each class should play in their own area of the school yard.
- Children are encouraged to tell the teacher/ supervisor/ in the yard if they feel they are being bullied. (See Anti Bullying Policy)
- Healthy lunches are promoted within the school. Pupils may have a treat on a Friday. Chewing gum, crisps and fizzy drinks are not allowed at anytime.
- Pupils may not leave the school grounds for any reason without permission..
- Teachers will collect the children from their lines, after break.
- Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire is a Green School. Children are expected to keep their classrooms/school clean and tidy and put all waste in the correct bins.
- Name calling or bad language is not allowed in the school.
- Pupils must not damage school property.
- When children are playing on the yard physical contact (e.g. pushing, pulling, slide tackling, kicking) is not allowed. Pupils are advised to go to the teacher/ supervisor on yard if there is a problem.

### **Toilets:**

- Pupils must use toilet paper or toilet soap in an appropriate manner.
- Pupils are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet.

### **In Class:**

- Each child is expected to have all of the text books and equipment necessary for his/her particular class.
- Each child must do his/her homework in a neat and tidy manner and must bring in a note from parents to his/her teacher if homework is not done.
- Children must treat all staff members and visitors with respect.
- All classes should participate in the development of their class rules and agree to keep them.

### **Substance Use** (See Substance Use Policy)

Children must not bring illegal drugs, cigarettes etc. to school.

### **Outside of the school:** (When accompanied by teacher(s))

- The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school trips, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and games after school.
- Children must cross the road only at the direction of the teacher/adult or parent who is with them on the school trip.

### **Going Home:**

- Pupils must leave the school in an orderly fashion at all times.
- If a pupil has to leave early, a note should be given to the class teacher. Children leaving school early should be collected from the classroom or office by a parent/ guardian or adult nominated by them (by phone or note).

## **STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

The degree of misbehaviour (i.e. minor serious or gross) will be decided by the teachers on the basis of their professional judgement and based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of the misbehaviour. These decisions will take into account the age/ stage of development of the children as well as outside influences.

## **EXAMPLES OF MINOR MISBEHAVIOUR**

- Interrupting class work (e.g. walking around the classroom without permission; talking at an inappropriate time; making noise; fiddling; eating at the wrong time)
- Running in school building.
- Leaving litter around school.
- Being discourteous/unmannerly.
- Not completing homework without good reason

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH MINOR MISBEHAVIOUR**

A staged approach is envisaged in dealing with minor incidents of unacceptable behaviour

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Child moved to somewhere else in the classroom or required to work away from others
- Parents/guardians informed generally by a note in homework diary, letter or phone call
- Loss of Privileges
- Teachers' will keep a record of continuous minor misbehaviour and all incidents of unacceptable behaviour, in own diary
- Behaviour noted in pupil's annual report/ P/T meetings
- Parents requested to meet class teacher
- Referral to/ send for Principal as appropriate. Children being sent to the principal must be accompanied by an other student.

## **EXAMPLES OF SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR**

- Constantly disruptive in class.
- Telling lies (Interpreting what is a 'lie' will relate to age of the child).
- Stealing – intentional taking of items. (Interpreting 'stealing' will relate to age of the child).
- Endangering self / fellow pupils.
- Damage to school / other pupil's property.
- Throwing things.
- Back answering staff.
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Using unacceptable language.
- Bringing weapons to school or using objects as weapons in school.
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil / staff member / visitor etc.
- Bullying (See separate Policy Document)
- Making threats of physical violence to a staff member or fellow pupil.

## **RECORDING INCIDENTS OF SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR**

Each teacher will record all incidents of serious misbehaviour by pupils. This information will be stored in the pupil's file and should also be recorded in the Serious Misbehaviour book in the principal's office. Incidents of serious misbehaviour on the yard, will be recorded in the yard books.

## **STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR IN CLASS**

- In the case of a serious incident of misbehaviour, providing for 'time out' may be useful. (The child goes to a particular place in the classroom designated as the time out or cool down area).
- Exiting a child from the classroom may be necessary where the classroom is significantly disrupted. The pupil will be escorted, by an adult, to a designated teacher(s) classroom e.g. Deputy Principal, neighbouring teacher or principal's office for a period of time to assist the pupil in getting ready to amend the behaviour so that the pupil may return to his classroom as soon as possible. It will be anticipated that the pupil, on returning to his class, will apologise to those affected by the misbehaviour( pupils and teachers) and resume his/her work without causing further disruption.
- Utilising a Behaviour Plan (see Understanding Behaviour below) may be considered when a child consistently exhibits challenging and disruptive behaviour. A Behaviour Plan will focus on one behaviour at a time and the achievement of the targets will be reinforced positively. It is envisaged that the child will be involved in the setting of targets. If a child is entitled to a support teacher on the basis of his/her behavioural needs, the support teacher may set targets in consultation with the child, the class teacher and the parents.

## **UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR**

The staff at Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire are aware of the factors that affect behaviour. These factors include external and interpersonal factors (such as parent and family patterns and relationships, peer groups/friends and neighbourhood and community factors) and within-person factors (including age and stage of development, personality and temperament, physical and medical characteristics and ability to learn). For pupils who show particularly challenging behaviour, a sustained and systematic response involving the adults in their lives and local/other support services will be provided as appropriate (Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour – blue book - p50- N.E.W.B.) We use a variety of behaviour plans such as The Incredible Years, The PATHS and The STOP, THINK, programmes to help with serious misbehaviour. These are available in the staff room.

## **STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH CONTINUOUSLY DISRUPTIVE PUPILS/SERIOUS INCIDENTS OF MISBEHAVIOUR**

The staff at Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire will intervene early and positively when student behaviour does not meet the standards of behaviour expected in the school. Early involvement of parents is considered important. A problem solving approach will be engaged to enable staff respond to unwanted behaviour (Guidelines p.46-47- N.E.W.B.). This may involve the following steps:

1. Gather information – understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour.
2. Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening.
3. Decide and agree on specific strategies.
4. Implement the agreed strategy consistently.
5. Review progress – evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention.
6. Throughout, keep the relationship with the student as positive as possible - involve the student and parent.

## **STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH CONTINUOUSLY DISRUPTIVE PUPILS and/or SERIOUS INCIDENTS OF MISBEHAVIOUR ARE AS FOLLOWS -**

- The pupil will be warned officially to stop offending.
- The parents/guardians will be informed.
- Loss of Privileges
- The parents will be invited to meet either the class teacher, the Principal and/or the chairperson to discuss serious incidents of misbehaviour.
- The Board of Management may exclude the pupil from the school premises at break and/or lunch times.
- The Board of Management may arrange for the pupil to be escorted from the classroom to the gate at assembly and dismissal times.
- In the event of a serious incident of misbehaviour or where a pupil is continuously disruptive the Board of Management may suspend him/her for a minor fixed period (one to three school days).
- A programme of intervention may also be formulated, in cooperation with the parents, to enable the child manage and change his/her behaviour.

## **GROSS MISBEHAVIOUR**

### **Examples include:**

- Wilful damage to property;
- Deliberately setting out to do damage e.g. leaving taps/fire extinguisher turned on, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards any staff member/pupil/parent /visitor etc.
- Setting fire to school property;
- Any act of assault against pupils, staff member, visitor, parent etc.

In the event of gross misbehaviour by a pupil the Principal/Chairperson/Board will be notified. The Principal/Board will examine the issues. The Principal/Board may consider sanctions including immediate suspension pending discussion with the parents/guardians (see below).

## **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION**

The Board of Management and Staff of Scoil Na Coróine Mhuire will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 – 12).

Fair procedures (i.e the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person (p73).

The Board of Management will also follow the factors to consider before suspending a student (p.72) and the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student (p82).

### **In relation to suspension,**

- Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.
- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p73). The parents/guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
- A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians. A suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective. The letter will confirm;
  - the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
  - the reasons for the suspension
  - any programme of study to be followed

- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
  - the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
  - the right to appeal to the Secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29).
- The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB '*Student Absence Report Form*' (when applicable).
  - When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the principal.
  - Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the chairperson of the Board of Management.
  - If a pupil continues to misbehave he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents/guardians to address the issues.
  - As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.
  - The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
  - Section 29 Appeal – when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

**PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION – The procedures outlined on pages 83 – 86 of the guidelines will be followed (see steps 1-6 below):**

- Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion) by the Board of Management. This excludes expulsion for a first offence - see p. 81
  - Step 1 – A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
  - Step 2 – A recommendation to the Board of Management
  - Step 3 – Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
  - Step 4 – Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
  - Step 5 – Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
  - Step 6 – Confirmation of the decision to expel
- A record will be kept in the school by the teacher and principal of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils.
  - Breaches of behaviour will be recorded in writing by the class teacher and if necessary by the Principal
  - Other relevant school policies (eg. Health & Safety) may be referred to.
  - The school's Anti Bullying Policy is attached to this policy.

## **PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's 'Code of Behaviour' but teachers will use their professional judgment in relation to regularity and level of sanctions. While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of misdemeanors, they will also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural difficulties. Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child to improve his/her behaviour. This may involve working and co-operating with a Special Needs Assistant(SNA), if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.

## **SUCCESS CRITERIA**

Practical indicators of the success of the policy include:-

- A happy and caring school environment
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.
- Observation of behaviour in class rooms, corridors and the yard.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The people who have particular responsibility for aspects of the policy are

- Board of Management
- Principal
- Class teacher
- Parents
- Pupils

The overall responsibility for behaviour within the school rests with the Principal.

However the Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for behaviour under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of behaviour applies therein.

## **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

This policy will apply from \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers will discuss the code with the pupils in the school and formally teach/revise the expectations for behaviour each term so that pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Each teacher will ensure that their class develops classroom rules and that children agree to follow these.

Parents will also be informed of the code by newsletter and by having a copy of the code sent home for their perusal.

## **TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended \_\_\_\_\_

## **RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

The Board of Management officially ratified this policy in \_\_\_\_\_

The policy will be circulated to parents/guardians of applicants on enrolment.