



## Scoil Naomh Mhuire Code of Positive Behaviour

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## 1. Introduction

At Scoil Naomh Mhuire, our vision is for a happy, safe, caring and high-achieving learning environment, where:

- all relationships and interactions are underpinned by the Catholic ethos and the Christian values of kindness, honesty, integrity, fairness and mutual respect
- the highest possible teaching standards are met and optimum learning conditions are created
- a broad and varied curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programme is delivered by a highly motivated and committed team who set very high expectations for all pupils so that each may reach his/her potential and discover the many talents they naturally possess
- parents and guardians and community members are welcomed, and their contributions are valued.
- Inclusion and tolerance are important values to us and we work hard to ensure that all pupils know and feel that they belong here, they matter here and that they can succeed here.

This involves a sense of 'community' within the school and a high level of co-operation between staff, students and parents/guardians, which is best achieved by fostering and building positive relationships.

We seek to accommodate the individuality of each child while also upholding the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment and the entitlement of staff to perform their responsibilities without impairment.

In the revision of our Code of Positive Behaviour, input has been sought from staff, parents, pupils and the Board of Management. Our hope is that this revised Code will give clear guidance to children, staff and parents so we can work together for the best positive behaviour outcomes.



Our code acknowledges that the understanding of rules and consequences will vary, according to a child's age and ability. It aims to reflect our commitment to provide positive support for all our pupils including those who have particular behaviour difficulties. This support can include individual behaviour plans and the active teaching of relevant positive behaviour skills.

The Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Anti-Bullying Policy  
Child Safeguarding Statement  
Attendance Strategy Statement  
Healthy Eating Policy  
Acceptable Use Policy  
School Uniform Policy  
Working Together – Staff Relations

## 2. Rationale

### 2.1 Recognising and Rewarding Good Behaviour

Where possible, younger children will be taught the six **Golden Rules** and older children will agree rules with their class teachers based on the **core values of our school** (kindness, honesty, fairness, integrity and mutual respect). These rules will be a frequent reference point towards positive behaviour. Taking a 'Catch them when they're good' approach, good behaviour will be affirmed and rewarded in age and ability-appropriate ways.

### 2.2 A Restorative Approach

We aim to adopt a restorative approach when dealing with conflicts or issues of misbehaviour. This approach gives opportunities for pupils, and adults, to take responsibility for their behaviour and its effect on the learning environment. When unacceptable behaviour occurs, the opportunity is created for those involved to reflect in a fair, impartial manner on the situation, acknowledging the harm done and those affected by it, the aim being to help heal broken relationships and prevent this behaviour happening again.



### 3. Role and Responsibilities of Adults

#### 3.1 School Staff:

All staff at Scoil Naomh Mhuire have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other. Their good example has an important influence on the children. Staff are expected to:

- create a positive, caring atmosphere, with realistic expectations for each child and adult
- model and promote courtesy, respect, honesty, kindness, forgiveness and fair treatment to all – children and adults alike.
- know, model and teach/ remind children of the Golden Rules
- affirm positive behaviour and appreciate the contribution of all
- cooperate in keeping good order in school so effective teaching and learning can take place
- promote respect for property and care for the school and wider environment
- practise and promote the early resolution of relational difficulties, and of situations resulting from unacceptable behaviour, in a constructive restorative manner
- adhere to the agreed approach to discipline

#### 3.2 Parents:

Best behaviour outcomes are seen when school and parents work together. Parents are expected to support the school's Code of Positive Behaviour in the following ways:

- **Positive Message:** speak positively with their child about the importance of keeping school rules and observing the school's core values of kindness, honesty, integrity, fairness, and mutual respect.



- **Respectful Communication:** model the school values in respectful communication with school staff, e.g. by responding to teachers' notes in homework diary; when addressing any concern with the teacher, etc. and making an appointment with the class teacher if there is an issue or concern to be discussed.
  
- **Good Attendance:** promote the importance of good attendance (except when sick or at necessary appointments), informing the school about all absences via the Aladdin app; avoid holidays during school term-time.
  
- **Care/ Provision of Belongings:** help child learn to care for his/ her belongings, including labelling items of clothing and not bringing items of value into school.
  
- **Homework:** take an active interest in child's homework, (e.g. hearing reading or spellings, checking work, etc.); 'sign the homework diary each evening **after** ensuring that homework has been completed; give reason for work not completed; and contact the teacher if homework is causing worry for child. (See 'Homework' section below for more detail.)
  
- **Cooperative Approach:** if child is working on improving a particular behaviour at school, cooperate with staff by using the agreed approach at home too, where possible.
  
- **Restorative Approach:** cooperate with school if their child has engaged in unacceptable behaviour, taking a restorative approach to help the child (when able) to reflect on the behaviour, acknowledge harm done and talk about how things can be made right.



- **Pride in Uniform:** instil a sense of pride in the school and in wearing uniform and adhere to the School Uniform Policy.

## 4. Code of Positive Behaviour

In order to feel safe, secure and to develop skills for cooperation, children benefit from boundary setting. Therefore, there must be rules.

### 4.1 Six Golden Rules

1. I will be gentle. I will not hurt anyone.
2. I will be kind. I will not hurt people's feelings.
3. I will listen. I will not interrupt.
4. I will respect property. I will not waste or damage things.
5. I will work hard. I will do my best.
6. I will be honest. I will not hide the truth.

Teachers will aim to teach the **Six Golden Rules** to our younger children, talking about the reasons for the rules. Where necessary, one rule may be worked on at a time, using reward systems or positive behaviour supports. This approach will also be helpful for pupils with behavioural difficulties.

For the older children, in relevant classes, the teacher will build on the positive behaviours outlined in the 'Six Golden Rules'. At the start of each year, the core values of **kindness, honesty, integrity, fairness, and mutual respect** of Scoil Naomh Mhuire will be discussed and the class will draw up a list of relevant class rules, based on these values.

Rules will be kept to a minimum and will be for the safety, well-being and good order of the class and the school community.

Teachers and SNAs will affirm positive attitudes and behaviour and teachers will devise suitable reward systems to motivate and to celebrate positive behaviour.

### 4.2 Attendance and the Education Welfare Act

Daily attendance is required for all pupils except in the case of illness or an appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.



Holidays during school term-time are strongly discouraged.

Good attendance will be encouraged in the school as it is an extremely important aspect of each child's progression in learning and social skills.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, a parent/ guardian must provide an explanation when a child is absent. This should be done via the Aladdin school app.

Early collection and late drop off must also be notified and explained via the Aladdin app. This is to ensure that we have a continuous written record of all school missed for every pupil.

On arrival to collect their child, parents/guardians must call to the school office in the front building and the child will be called for from there. When leaving with their child, they should sign out in the book provided in the front porch.

Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to TESS (Tusla Education Support Service). The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues.

#### **4.3 Homework Journal and Homework**

The homework journal is an important communication tool between parents and the school. The school expects parents to read and sign the journal each night.

Homework will be written down in the notebook. If, for some reason, homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal.

#### **4.4 Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices**

Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones or electronic devices into school and the use of same is strictly prohibited.

Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so using the landline phone in the school office.



Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the device until the end of the school day.

The school takes no responsibility for the safekeeping of phones or other personal devices brought into school and will not be liable for any loss or damage to same.

#### **4.5 School Uniform**

All pupils must wear the school uniform as detailed on the school website and in the Information for Parents Booklet. Where a child has sensory or medical issues that make them uncomfortable wearing particular uniform items, modifications may be agreed with the Principal.

## **5. Incentives and Reward Systems**

The use of praise, incentives and rewards for good behaviour is promoted within the school.

We aim to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually, and socially.

We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems.

Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Praise is earned by the effort to attain and maintain good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal efforts.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given;

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A note to a pupil or a comment in his/her exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers



- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

An important part of our approach to encouraging positive behaviour is in noticing the children's efforts with schoolwork, behaviour, and in modelling and living our core values, and praising them for this effort. In this way, we aim to create a body of students who are intrinsically motivated to set high standards for themselves, rather than constantly being extrinsically motivated through rewards.

However, sometimes in order to get pupils on the path or into the habit of good habits and behaviours, reward systems are beneficial, and the following are samples of some reward systems currently in use in the school:

**Junior Classes** – Stickers / Star Charts / Team or table of the week / extra play (Aistear) time

**Middle Classes** – Students 'beat the teacher' / stickers in journals and copies/ golden time/ homework vouchers

**Senior Classes** – Class Dojo / Note writing by the teachers, noting effort in schoolwork and in living our core values / golden time / homework vouchers

## 6. Unacceptable Behaviour; Interventions

Although the emphasis at Scoil Naomh Mhuire will be on the promotion of positive behaviour, there will be times when misbehaviour occurs and needs to be addressed.

All staff have a shared responsibility to familiarise themselves with the Positive Behaviour Code, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

No child or adult should be treated in an unacceptable way.

Where a child is upset by another child and feels unable to resolve the situation, she/ he is encouraged, if able, to seek an adult's help instead of reacting in an unacceptable way.

Adults should avoid scolding the misbehaving child and should respond as calmly as possible, reporting any notable misbehaviour, observed or experienced, to the



class/ supervising teacher. It is then the teacher's responsibility to decide on appropriate interventions.

Interventions should be restorative rather than punitive. They should be used in a respectful way as part of a plan to help a pupil, where able, to understand the consequences of his/ her behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. Where upset or harm has been caused by this behaviour to another pupil, or to a member of staff, the restorative approach should be used, apology given and amends made.

Interventions should:

- help a child reflect, take responsibility and, where relevant, make amends
- diffuse and not escalate the situation
- preserve the dignity of all parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way

If a child understands the rules and behaves in a way that is not in keeping with our core values, he/ she will be encouraged to respond in good grace and to take a restorative approach, acknowledging the unacceptable behaviour and trying to put things right. Parents will be contacted about behaviours of concern.

Where a cognitive disability or a behaviour disorder means that a child either cannot understand rules or finds it difficult at times to comply with rules, the teacher will consult with parents and, where relevant, with therapists/ colleagues/ an external professional to agree on strategies to help the child reduce unacceptable or challenging behaviour.

## 7. Levels of Misbehaviour and Behaviour Modification Response:

There are three levels of unacceptable behaviour: **Minor, Serious and Gross.**

### 7.1 Minor Misbehaviour

Examples include:



- not paying attention or following instructions
- chatting and distracting others in class
- rudeness
- being cheeky when reprimanded
- use of any device in school capable of recording events
- rough play
- mild bad language
- failure to complete homework, without explanation from parent / guardian
- choosing not to wear uniform

(NOTE: Where the teacher feels that a pupil has a genuine difficulty in complying with a particular school rule, a behaviour support plan should be devised/ reward system set up, e.g. star chart/ tokens, to help the pupil improve in this area. Cooperation between home and school on such positive interventions are key.)

## 7.2 Serious Misbehaviour

Examples include:

- repeated incidences of minor misbehaviours
- repeated rough play causing injury
- acts of aggression, including threats or physical harm to another person
- behaviour that is hurtful, including bullying\*, harassment, discrimination & victimisation
- bad or inappropriate language directed at a child or adult
- refusal to do schoolwork or homework
- damage to property
- theft
- bringing dangerous items to school
- leaving classroom, school activities or the school grounds without permission

### NOTES:

\* Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional- conducted by an individual or group against another or others. For more detail, please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy.



### 7.3 Gross Misbehaviour

Gross Misbehaviours are where a student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the safe operation of the school.

Examples include:

- repeated serious misbehaviour
- assault on a pupil, staff member or other adult at school
- fighting
- bullying
- wilful serious damage to property
- serious theft
- bringing dangerous item to school, e.g. sharp knife, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes

A single incident of gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

## 8. Sanctions

The use of sanctions should be characterised by certain features;

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

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately.

They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and nine being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is not exhaustive and nor is it necessarily linear. The teacher will use discretion to decide the appropriate step to take when incidences of negative behaviour occur. The aim of any sanction is to



prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this.

The particular stage used will depend on the seriousness of the misbehaviour.

1. Reasoning with the pupil (including advice on how to improve).
2. Reprimand or warning regarding behaviour. This may occur privately or in the classroom / public space.
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others. (5-15 minutes within own classroom or the yard area to complete task at hand, cool down or to talk with a teacher)
4. Loss of privileges/Reflecting on my Choices Sheet
5. Teacher communicates with parents / guardians – solutions and strategies outlined. Teacher also informs Principal at this stage.
6. Referral to the principal teacher.
7. Exclusion from some school activities.
8. Temporary suspension.
9. Expulsion

Communication with parents / guardians through letters, phone call or meetings will occur at all stages from stage four or where necessary so that parents/guardians are involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

## 9. Suspension

**Procedures in respect of Suspension will be followed in line with pages 70 - 77 of the NEWB Guidelines**

In a situation involving repeated minor or serious breaches of the Code of Positive Behaviour or a single incidence of gross misbehaviour, suspension will be enforced at this point.



A letter to this effect will issue to the parents/guardians of the student.

In the event that a parent is unable to attend at the school, a letter will be issued to the student and a copy will be forwarded by post to the student's parents/guardians.

It is school policy that any student serving a suspension must complete assigned schoolwork for the duration of his/her suspension and will be re-admitted to the school on the following conditions:

1. This work being completed and checked.
2. Returning to school with either/both parents/guardians and/or telephone conversation with Principal/Deputy Principal.

Further and/or repeat incidents may result in a further period of suspension.

Persistent breaches of the school 'Code of Positive Behaviour' will result in the student's case being referred to the Board of Management. Taking cognisance of the facts of each individual case, the Board of Management may authorise further exclusion of the student up to a maximum of ten school days to enable further consideration of the case.

A decision regarding suspension by the Principal or Acting Principal may be appealed to the Board of Management within a reasonable period of time of being informed of the decision, having regard for the educational and safety needs of all parties concerned.

Where the total number of days for which a student is suspended in the current school year reaches twenty, the parents/guardians of the student, pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act (1998), have the right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, within a reasonable period of time from the date that the parent/guardian was informed of the decision and following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school.



## 10. Expulsion

**Procedures in respect of Expulsion will be followed in line with page 82 of the NEWB Guidelines**

Where an incident or series of incidents merit consideration of 'permanent exclusion' of a student by the Board of Management, the procedures set out in Section 12 NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (2008) will inform any such decision as well as the procedures set out within this document.

### 10.1 Grounds for Expulsion

- Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- Pupil responsible for serious damage to property.

### 10.2 Automatic Expulsion

The Board of Management (BoM) may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

1. Sexual Assault
2. Possession of illegal drugs
3. Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
4. Actual violence or physical assault
5. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.

### 10.3 Factors the Board of Management may consider before proposing to expel a pupil:

1. The nature and the seriousness of the behaviour;
2. The context of the behaviour;
3. The impact of the behaviour;



4. The interventions tried to date;
5. Whether expulsion is a proportionate response;
6. The possible impact of an expulsion.

#### **10.4 Procedures in respect of Expulsion for Behaviours others than those leading to 'Automatic Expulsion'**

1. Detailed investigation by school principal
2. Recommendation by Principal to BoM
3. BoM considers Principal's recommendation and holds hearing
4. BoM decides if expulsion is appropriate. If BoM recommends expulsion, the BoM will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period. In other words, the intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days after the parents / guardians have been notified of the decision.
5. Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
6. Parents of the pupil are informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
7. Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
8. Confirmation of decision.

#### **10.5 Right of Appeal:**

A parent/guardian may appeal a decision of the Board of Management to expel a student from Scoil Naomh Mhuire pursuant to Section 29 Education Act 1998.

Further details are available to a parent/guardian from the Department of Education and Skills.



Chair BOM 18/11/2022