

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

(updated November 2017)

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Cailíní

A. Introductory Statement

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Cailíní has reviewed review its Code of Behaviour in line with NEWB guidelines on 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' 2008 and the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23. A Code of Behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated in a relatively disruption free environment.

B. Rationale

- It is a priority area identified by the whole school community.
- It ensures an orderly climate for learning in the school.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23.
- It ensures that existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, NEWB, 2008.

C. Relationship to ethos of school

(a) We are a community of pupils, parents and staff in which all are unique, valued and respected. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences.

(b) It is agreed 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, parents and pupils.

(c) Every effort will be made to ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.

D. Aims

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by the Mission Statement of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál
- To create an atmosphere of **respect, tolerance and consideration** for others.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To enhance the **learning environment** where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

- To foster a sense of **responsibility** and **self-discipline** in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- To foster **caring attitudes** to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood by the parents through the availability of school policies and an ethos of open communication.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

E. Content of Policy

.Guidelines for behaviour in the school:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's property and their own belongings.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Each pupil is expected to wear the school uniform/tracksuit daily in accordance with the School Uniform Policy.
- Each pupil is expected to keep the school tidy and litter-free in accordance with the school's Green School Motto.

Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is a recognised DEIS Band 2 School. A whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour involves co-operation between staff, parents, pupils, the Board of Management and agencies working under DEIS guidelines. The pupils bring to school a wide variety of behaviours. As a community environment, all parties must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principals.

Pupils will

- **Show courtesy and respect.**
- Come to school on time and have all the necessary books.
- Do his/her homework carefully and completely. Written excuses must be provided if homework is not completed.
- Listen when others are talking.
- Participate in all class activities.
- Avoid distracting behaviour.
- Observe the rules when the bell rings, lining up in an orderly fashion and walking to classroom quietly.
- Walk in single file on the corridors and as a matter of courtesy, stand back to allow adults to pass by

- Have names written on coats, cardigans/jumpers, track suit tops and personal belongings.
- Provide a note in the case of medical/dental appointments and advise parents/guardians that children may be collected at school office.
- Avail of/bring a healthy lunch to school as Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is a *Health Promoting School*.
- Follow the yard rules and the classroom rules as drawn up by each class.
- Use respectful ways to resolve difficulties and conflict.

Pupils expect:

- A safe and happy place where teaching and learning are at the core.
- A setting suited to their learning style.
- Affirming of all their abilities, gifts and talents.
- To be enabled to deal with bullying and supportive of victims.

Parents expect:

- A safe and happy environment for their child
- A place where children are prepared for lifelong learning
- Recognition and provision for the individual differences of pupils
- Support for children who need it
- Fairness and consistency in the way children are dealt with
- No labelling of their child
- An atmosphere of support and inclusion rather than criticism
- Contact at an early stage to inform them of any problems
- A willingness to listen to their viewpoint
- Suggestions and support about problems in school

Teachers expect:

- A positive climate with realistic expectations
- Honesty and courtesy
- A caring and effective learning environment
- Relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- An environment free of physical aggression
- Support from parents/guardians

School Rules

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for others' property
- Respect other students and their learning
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Walk quietly in the school building
- Courtesy and good manners
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Ask permission to leave the classroom
- Do your best in class
- Take responsibility for your own work
- School motto **'Let us play, learn and grow together'**

These can be summed up in the 'Golden Rules' of the school.

- *Be gentle*
- *Be kind and helpful*
- *Be honest*
- *Listen*
- *Work hard*
- *Look after property*

Restorative questions included in policy review (16/02/2016)

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Restorative Questions to help those harmed by the actions of others:

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected you?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Classroom Strategies

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

The following represents the normal sequence of sanctions but this may vary depending on the individual circumstances.

Sanctions

1. Reasoning with the pupil
2. Reminder of school or class rules
3. Seek an explanation
4. Change position in the class
5. Temporary isolation from peers
6. Misbehaviour recorded and parents/guardians informed
7. Additional work prescribed / writing out the story of what happened
8. Loss of minor privileges.
9. Report sent to Principal.

Behaviour in the Playground

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers, offends or deliberately excludes others is not permitted. Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited. Running in the yard is not allowed for Health and Safety reasons.

Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without permission of the supervising teacher; this includes re-entering the school building.

The Essential Playground Rules

1. Stay within the boundaries in yard
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated
3. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
4. Respect all school property
5. Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.

Behaviour in the School Environment & Behaviour on School Outings

Respect and courtesy to others is essential. Any kind of verbal or physical abuse of other pupils is unacceptable. Use of foul language among pupils is unacceptable. Bullying or intimidation of other pupils is prohibited and is always regarded as a serious offence. Pupils must show respect for school property at all times. For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the school in an orderly manner.

Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school. When on school outings pupils are expected to behave in an orderly manner and show respect for public property. They should always co-operate fully with their teachers and special needs staff.

Attendance/Education Welfare Act

Under the Education Welfare Act 200, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note written in school journal and signed by parent. Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to Education Welfare Board. Any child wishing to leave school early must have a note signed by their parent. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues. Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to office secretary. Parents/Guardians must sign out pupils who are collected early from school. Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. School opens to receive pupils at 8.40 each morning. The parent is requested to contact the school if their child is absent from school for a day or longer. After a pupil has been absent, a note from the parent must always be brought to the class

teacher upon the pupil's return to school. When a pupil has to leave school early (i.e. before 1.30/2.30pm) a note from parents must be brought to the class teacher stating the time at which the pupil is to leave. An attendance committee meets monthly in the school to review attendance. Please refer to School Attendance Policy.

Homework

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. The time taken for this will vary from child to child, but should in most cases take between 30 minutes and one hour. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. Parents should sign the homework journal to confirm that the work has been fully attempted.

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

Generally, homework is not given at weekends. Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is not permitted. Please refer to the school Homework Policy for further information.

Jewellery

Students are permitted to wear stud earrings and watch only.

Mobile phones/iPods/Electronic Games

Use of mobile phones, iPods and electronic games during school hours is strictly forbidden. All devices must be switched off and handed up to the class teacher. The devices will be returned at home time. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any other electronic equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil.

School Uniform

All pupils must wear the school uniform. Please refer to School Uniform Policy

School Journal

The school journal is an important communication tool between parents and the school. Please read and sign the journal each night. Please ensure the personal information page in your school journal is completed.

Intervention of Principal

The following represents the normal sequence of sanctions but this may vary depending on individual circumstances.

- verbal reprimand
- removal from the group (in class)
- withdrawal of privileges

- withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group
- carrying out a useful task in the school
- formal report to the Board of Management

Incentives

Part of the vision of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is 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. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

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

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

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Sanctions

There is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment

- 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 pupil behaves inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this;

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Teacher communicating with parents
7. Referral to Principal
8. Principal communicating with parents
9. Suspension or Expulsion from school in accordance with the NEWB guidelines on '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' 2008)

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the NEWB guidelines on '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' 2008 and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period of between 3 and 5 days pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents, the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, the principal and any other parties involved with that pupil. The school will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable. A reduced day for a pupil may be recommended by a psychologist or the principal in response to the needs of the pupil and/or for the health and safety of the other pupils. This will be enforced and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in consultation with all parties.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Parent/Teacher Contact

Parents play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes which produce good behaviour in school. Parents are always welcome in the school and are encouraged to take full advantage of all formal and informal channels of communication made available by the school. Individual parent/teacher meetings are organised once a year. However, it is possible to meet a teacher at any other time during the year provided an appointment has been arranged in advance.

The school expects the parent to notify the school by phone call on the first day of absence. A child who has been absent from school is required to give an explanatory note to his/her class teacher on returning to school which outlines the reason for their child's absence. For significant periods of absence due to illness, the parent is required to provide a doctor's certificate to the principal. For planned absences from school due to travel plans, the parents must provide the school with a letter explaining the reason for this trip along with the dates of absence. If a parent fails to notify the school regarding absence/absences of their child/children the principal will firstly contact him/her by phone to request an explanation. In the event that this is not successful the HSCL teacher will endeavour to make contact by visiting the home address of the family. If this is unsuccessful the Educational Welfare Officer will be notified.

Parents sometimes have to collect children early from school in order to visit doctor/dentist etc. Children must be collected from their classrooms, signed out/back in the Secretary's Office and Class Teacher/Principal informed in advance.

Should a child for one reason or another be unable to complete his/her homework it would be helpful to the teacher if a parent could write a brief note in the homework journal/copy book.

A copy of this code is available to all parents.

Related Policies available on request:

1. Anti-Bullying
2. Health & Safety Statement
3. Admission and Participation (Enrolment) Policy
4. Child Protection Policy.
5. Attendance Policy
6. Homework Policy
7. Uniform Policy
8. Mobile Phone Policy

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationship with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

Other Agencies

Full use will be made of such agencies as Education Welfare Officers, Social Services, Health Services and the Educational Psychological Services where appropriate.

Timetable for Review

This code will be reviewed each year by a member of the Board of Management, a member of the Parents' Association and a member of the staff.

Ratification and Implementation

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on Nov. 20th 2017