

Code of Behaviour



S. N. Cill Conla

Introductory Statement

This policy was reviewed by the Principal, teaching staff and ancillary staff of S.N. Cill Conla in consultation with the Board of Management in Term 1 of the school year 2024-2025. Pupils were involved by reviewing the rules and by dialoguing with the teachers in relation to the rationale behind the rules. Suggestions were discussed in relation to sanctions and rewards and the fairness of them. The Parents Association were invited to contribute to the revised code of behaviour.

Rationale

- It is necessary to provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour for the well-being of our school as a community. From this will come a strong sense of civic awareness and care for the environment.
- It is necessary to review the policy at this time to ensure the existing policy is in compliance with legislative requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008. (pp7-9)
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1)
- The code of behavior helps all members of the school community to promote a happy environment which leads to learning and social development.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

- The Code of Behaviour expresses the vision, mission and values of this school and its Patron, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Kerry.
- We in S.N. Cill Conla hope to foster a sense of pride in our school. We hope to work in co-operation with home which has the strongest influence on a child's life. The whole school community are expected to uphold the ethos of the school in an atmosphere of self-discipline, mutual respect and tolerance for others. The basic principles underpinning our Code of Behaviour are outlined in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008. (pp22-23) and are as follows.

Clarity	Affirmation that everyone's behaviour matters
Focus on promoting good behaviour	Balancing needs
Focus on personal responsibility	Recognition that relationships are crucial
Fairness and Equity	Promoting Equality
Recognition of educational vulnerability	Attention to the welfare of students
Attention to the welfare of staff	Promotion of safety and freedom from threat

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Aims

- It is our aim to provide a happy and secure environment which is conducive to both the academic and personal development of each child.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents/guardians and pupils in understanding the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of the code.
- To ensure that the system of clear and concise rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

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1. Standards of Behaviour in the School

As required by Section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare Act, prior to registering a pupil the principal teacher shall provide the parents/guardians of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the principal 'may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents/guardians to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child'. 3

The standards of behaviour expected in this school reflect the following values of respect for self and others, kindness and willingness to help others, courtesy and good manners, fairness, readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and forgiveness.

In S.N. Cill Conla we expect;

- Respect and Courtesy: All pupils are expected to treat staff, their fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of foul language is unacceptable.
- 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.
- Children line up when the bell rings at the end of break time and lunch time.
- Noise is discouraged in these class lines and in the corridor on the way to and from breaks.
- Accidents are brought to the attention of the teacher on yard duty who decides what action is necessary to take. Small injuries will be dealt with on the yard by the teacher on yard duty. If the first aid box is required, the teacher will bring the child to the inside for attention.
- Children are expected to show the same respect that they show to their class teacher to all teachers and staff.
- Children must have the permission of their own teacher before entering another classroom.
- Children are not allowed to leave the school yard without permission
- Children are expected to treat all those they encounter in school with respect i.e teachers, staff, pupils, neighbours, helpers and any visitors. Aggressive behaviour is not tolerated.
- School begins at 9.20am and ends at 3.00pm. (Junior and Senior Infants classes at 2.00pm.)

- All pupils are expected to be present between these times. The school is not responsible for the safety of children on the premises outside of these hours. Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds at any stage unless their parents/guardians are there to collect them.
- Full uniform must be worn at all times with the exception of sport events.
- All personal property including coats, jumpers, cardigans and other personal property such as school books, copies and lunch boxes, etc. should be **clearly marked with the child's name**.
- Pupils are expected to be attentive in class and complete all assignments. Parents/guardians are encouraged to oversee homework. Parents/Guardians may be expected to **sign the homework diary** when they deem it to be successfully completed if applicable. The school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to report absences in excess of twenty days to TUSLA. Every absence of a child must be accounted for by using Aladdin Connect App. If a child wishes to leave school early parents may also use the app.
- Playground rules will be devised with regards to the health and safety of all pupils. Rough and unfair play and coarse language are always forbidden. Teacher on duty has a yard book that all incidents of rough and unfair play are recorded in.
- In the interest of health, a high standard of personal hygiene is expected and infectious illnesses should be notified to the school immediately.
- Glass bottles are not allowed in school.
- Chocolate, lollipops, fizzy drinks, chewing gum, crisps are not allowed in the school, with the exception of special events such as school tours. Refer to Healthy Eating policy.

Note: As we are a green school, we discourage the use of tinfoil and cling film to wrap lunches. We encourage parents/guardians to provide their children with lunch boxes.

- All forms of bullying are strictly forbidden and will be dealt with very severely in accordance with the school policy. Parents/guardians and pupils are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to the class teacher and/or the principal. All members of the school community are expected to be particularly vigilant and mindful of such behaviour.
- All pupils are expected to co-operate in keeping the school and its environs litter free.
- Generally, there is no homework at the weekends but occasionally it is given at the discretion of the teacher.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

In our school we aim to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour and discipline. This involves a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

Staff will encourage honesty, fairness, courtesy, co-operation, forgiveness, empathy, accepting difference and valuing the uniqueness of each person, understanding, friendship, justice and fair-play, self-respect and self-discipline.

Our Code of Behaviour also caters for children with special needs who may present behavioural difficulties arising from their special educational needs. These behavioural difficulties are addressed through the child's student support plan. All staff are sensitive to various factors, particular circumstances and cultural differences that may affect individual children's behaviour.

Principles for positive behaviour

- Plan for good behaviour.
- Deal with misbehaviour in a positive manner at all times
- Separate the behaviour from the child.
- Offer a choice when you are sanctioning a child.
- Actively build trust and support among teachers and pupils.
- Model the behaviour you want.
- Be mindful that the certainty of the sanction and not the severity of the sanction is what are important.
- Re-connect and repair the relationship.
- Keep rules to a minimum.
- Allow time for good behaviour to be learned.

SPHE Curriculum

- The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of behaving and interacting and conflict resolution skills.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

We believe that the best way to encourage good pupil behaviour is through a system of positive recognition and encouragement.

Teachers have reward systems for:

- Good Behaviour
- Improvement in Behaviour
- Hard work

Rewards include:

- Praise for behaving well/working hard
- Notes to parents acknowledging good behaviour
- Prizes & Stickers
- Certificates
- Golden Time
- Classroom reward system

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to;

- respect – themselves, others and property
- listen – to others and follow instructions from staff
- work – to the best of his/her ability
- help- others (pupils, staff, visitors)

At S.N. Cill Conla our classroom rules are devised in consultation with the pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave. A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour and a visit of the principal to the classroom to reinforce the rules can be arranged as the need arises. Classroom Rules are designed to ensure a positive teaching and learning environment for each pupil.

These sentiments are contained in the Golden Rules for our school listed as follows:

We raise our hands to speak.
We work quietly at our seats.
We use voices soft and sweet.
We keep our places tidy and neat.
We are helpful, friendly, and fair.
We take turns and always share.

Playground Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- remain – on school grounds and allocated playing areas at all times
- obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- respect – the yard duty teacher, SNA and fellow pupils
- avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling

Children are not allowed to leave the play surface areas without permission except in the case of a child needing to use the toilet. The toilet is to be left as they found it. The front of the school is off limits to children during break times. Everybody in or everybody out, is our general rule of thumb.

Behaviour in other School Areas

Each pupil is expected to:

- Walk in the school corridors
- Be courteous to all members of the school community.
- Respect school property
- Display good manners

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow – his/her teacher's directions at all times
- remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- observe – the rules of general good behaviour

School Uniform

Each child is expected to wear a full school uniform consisting of the school tracksuit and yellow polo shirt. During warmer weather, black knee length shorts are permitted in place of tracksuit pants. Footwear should be suitable for running and other sport based activities.

For health and safety reasons, artificial nails, and earrings other than studs are not permitted. Children are expected to have long hair tied back as much as possible. Make-up (including false tan and lashes) is not permitted.

Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the management of behaviour in their own class. Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- Positive approach.
- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the Class rules are understood in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive Behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive Behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process. It is understood by accepting a place for your child in the school, you are consenting to abide by the code and policies of the school.

Homework: It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child's homework. If homework causes worry for the pupil, parents/guardians are asked to contact the teacher.

4. Procedures for notifying the school about reasons for absence from school.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2) (e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, *“the procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.”* Section 18 stipulates that parents/guardians must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil’s absence;

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified via Aladdin App
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided

School attendance is encouraged by the following strategies

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- System for acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Adapting the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
- Making parents/guardians aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board? *See forms on www.tusla.ie*

5. Inappropriate Behaviour

Refer to Ch. 8 Responding to inappropriate behaviour, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline ‘the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined’.

Our school has agreed ways of describing behaviour, arrangements for recording behaviour and a ladder of intervention-See NEWB page 49

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Positive School Climate 'Catch them being good!'

Actions/ behaviour that stand out for exceptional reasons will receive a mention at school assembly & the child will receive a reward through the classroom reward system.

Behaviour is notably good or improved may see the child receive a reward through the classroom reward system.

Undesired behaviour		
Level	Behaviour	Possible Sanctions
Level 1 Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Out of seat -Calling out -Inattention/inactive listening -Pushing/shoving in the line rough play -Running indoors -Being in the appropriate place -Not on task -Untidy workspace -Incomplete uniform (school tracksuit) -Unlabelled uniform (school tracksuit) -Careless presentation of schoolwork -Not having necessary equipment (pencil case, homework journal etc.) 	<p>Informal gesture (eye contact, frown, hand gesture)</p> <p>Praise of someone behaving appropriately in close proximity.</p> <p>Move to different seat</p> <p>A warning/ private reminder about the behaviour we wish to see- inviting them to make the right choice.</p> <p>Repetition of a task/completion of work in their own time.</p>
Level 2 Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Persistent level one behaviours -Use of foul/offensive language -Careless use of school property -Repeated failure to complete homework -Disruption of class -Disrespect towards other children/visitors to the school/staff/ancillary staff. -Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin. -Use of mobile phone on school grounds during school hours. -Possession of any item likely to cause harm to others or property eg. Knives, cigarettes, lighters. 	<p>Classroom based interventions such as Circle time, Friend's for Life/ Zippy's Friends</p> <p>Class meetings, informal consultation with staff members/ parents/guardian</p> <p>Reminder of school/classroom rules</p> <p>School/ Classroom reward systems</p> <p>Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. (This information may be useful should a problem persist)</p> <p>Positive School Climate</p>
Level 3 Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Repeated instances of the above after warning regarding future conduct. -Use of abusive/threatening language or behaviour towards others. -Any acts of wilful violence towards others. -Stealing -Possession/supply and/or use of alcohol, cigarettes, illegal drugs, and/or harmful substances. 	<p>Use of interventions listed above</p> <p>Team conference to include class teacher and other staff involved</p> <p>Professional development/advice available for staff from the following Sign Post Manual, SENO, SESS, NEPS, INTO, IPPN, Education Centres.</p> <p>Assistance from external agencies such as NEPS, HSE Community Services, National Behavioural Support Service, CAMHS, National Council for Special Education</p>

<p>Level 3 Red</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bullying -Wilful damage or attempted damage of school property, property of staff, pupils or visitors. -Leaving school grounds during school hours without permission. -Discriminatory/ prejudicial activities/actions towards another person or group involving race, gender, religion, disability or ethnic origin. 	<p><i>This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.</i></p> <p><i>Suspension from school for five to ten days:</i></p> <p><i>This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.</i></p>	<p>Referral for a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent.</p> <p><i>Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school and contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement if illegal activity was involved. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document.</i></p>
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Staff will endeavour to take each child's circumstances into account when using our behaviour system such as age, SEN, home environment etc.

The rules will also apply to all and any school-related activities either within or outside the school, during normal school hours or outside these hours if the school-related activities necessitate this, e.g., sporting fixtures, educational trips, etc. Breaches by pupils from Junior Classes will be treated on a level more appropriate to their age, but the general expectation of good behaviour will apply to all pupils.

6. Suspension / Expulsion

Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include our procedures for suspension and expulsion in our code of behaviour.

Suspension

S. N. Cill Conla as required by law will follow fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice when proposing to suspend or expel a student. Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- **the right to be heard.**
- **The right to impartiality.**

In a school, fair procedures apply to:

- The **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and
- The process of **decision-making** as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanction to impose.

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of our particular school.

The **principles** of fair procedures always apply, but the degree of formality required in implementing fair procedures will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and on the seriousness of the possible sanction (Developing a Code of Behavior: Guidelines for Schools Pg67)

Authority to suspend

The Board of Management of S.N. Cill Conla has the authority to suspend a student.

Suspension:

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Forms of suspension:

Immediate suspension in exceptional circumstances, the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the BOM may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

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

Procedures in respect of suspension

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

- inform the student and their parents/guardians about the complaint
- Give parents/guardians and student an opportunity to respond.

Inform the student and parents/guardians

Let the student and their parents/guardians know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents/guardians will be informed in person and subsequently in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents/guardians in writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having let parents/guardians know. It also ensures that parents/guardians are clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents/guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Give an opportunity to respond

Parents/guardians and student should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the student and their parents/guardians provides an 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. Photographic evidence may be produced where feasible. It may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents/guardians 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 negative behaviour. The school should record the invitations made to parents/guardians and their response.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents/guardians must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents/guardians.

The period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than three days might be approved. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

Suspension

The Board of Management should normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. The Board should formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*

These provisions enable school authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

Appeals

The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*. At the time when parents/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and should be given information about how to appeal.

Appeals

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

- Parents/guardians will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms by the Principal and Chairperson of the BOM during an official meeting, whereby parents/guardians are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion.
- The BOM will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal should notify the parents/guardians and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians 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 letter should be clear and easy to understand. Particular care should be taken in communicating with parents/guardians who may have reading difficulties, or whose first language is not the language of the school.

Engaging with student and parents/guardians

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal and/or another staff member delegated by the Principal and/or a member of the BOM meets with the parents/guardians to emphasise their responsibility in helping the student to behave well when the student returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this. Where parents/guardians do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents/guardians about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The school should have a plan to help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. This plan will help to avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifies a cycle of academic failure. Successful re-integration goes beyond academic work. A suspended student may feel angry or resentful about their suspension, and these feelings can trigger problems with reintegration which, in turn, may lead to further problem behavior. Where possible, the school should arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Clean slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behavior and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school should expect the same behavior of this student as of all other student

Suspension records and reports

Records of investigation and decision-making:

Formal written records should be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to the Board of Management: The Principal should report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to TULSA: The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with TUSLA reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4) (a)).

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management should review the use of suspension 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 behavior in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Expulsion

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

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*. As part of the code of behavior, the Board of Management should ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedures for, expulsion which are in line with these Guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

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 behavior. 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 behavior. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behavior
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behavior, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. 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).

Expulsion

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

- The student's behavior 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

'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/guardians, 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 behavior 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.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management should undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

Inappropriate use of expulsion

Expulsion should not be proposed for:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

However, any behavior that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter.

Behavior must be examined in context to understand both the behavior itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

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 Principal's 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/guardians 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/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give parents/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents/guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Parents/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the student's behavior.

If a student and their parents/guardians 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 behavior. The school should record the invitation issued to parents/guardians 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/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents/guardians 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/guardians
- notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management

- ensure that parents/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians 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, s24 (1)*). 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, s24 (1)*).

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, s4A*). The Board should inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents/guardians 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/guardians 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, section 24*).

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 interests 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 (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)*). 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/guardians should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents/guardians 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.

Appeals

A parent 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.

The appeals 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.

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 behavior in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

7. Keeping records

For pupils who repeatedly misbehave a standardised record system may be used to track an individual pupil's Behaviour. Such records will contain;

- Incidents of misbehaviour
- Interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or referral to other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed, and the reasons they were imposed'
- May contain a reflection sheet completed by the student

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

8. Reference to other Policies

These policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Safety Statement
- Special Educational Needs

9. Success Criteria

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy:

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and pupils.

Roles and Responsibility

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy are the BOM, Principal, teaching staff, parents/guardians, pupils, SNA. Refer to section 1 of this policy for role played by the aforementioned. The principal and teaching staff will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.

Implementation Date

This policy has been implemented from September 2016 and is currently being updated.

Ratification and Timetable for Review

The BOM officially ratified the policy on 12/6/19 and will be reviewed within the next school year.

Signed: Seán Dalton
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Aislinn McMahon
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 11-3-2025

Reference Section

- Guidelines on Codes of Behavior TULSA 2016 <http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-schools-inc-absence-reporting/guidelines-on-codes-of-behaviour>
- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
 - Permanent exclusion from a school
 - Suspension
 - Refusal to enrol
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.
- Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino.

Pupil Reflection Sheet (Junior Room)

Name:	Age:	Date:
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Colour code of behaviour:	
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What I did?

What I am going to do to fix things?

Student's signature:

Teachers signature:	Date:
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Pupil Reflection Sheet (Senior Room)

Name:		Age:		Date:	
Colour code of behaviour					
What I did?			What I was thinking at the time?		
What have I thought since?			Who has been affected by my behaviour?		
How has it affected me?			What am I going to do to fix things?		
Teacher's comment:					
Student's signature:					
Teachers signature:				Date:	

Scoil Náisiúnta Cill Conla



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HOLIDAY NOTIFICATION LETTER.

Child's name: _____

Class Teacher's name: _____

Class level (circle): JI SI Rang 1 Rang 2

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, S. 17).

Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (9)).

Therefore, the school cannot give "permission" for holiday absences during term time.

We, the parents of the above named child are taking our child out of school for holidays from (date) _____ until (date) _____.

We fully understand that this is contrary to our legal obligation under the Education Welfare Act, 2000.

We further understand that should our child's absences reach or exceed 20 days in a year the school is obliged to report this to the Education Welfare Board/TÚSLA.

(Parent/Guardian)

(Parent/Guardian)

Where there are two guardians, both must sign.