

# **Code of Behaviour**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Parents/Guardians and a supportive home environment play an important role in shaping student attitudes, which produce good behaviour in schools. This in turn helps to mature students for adult life by fostering in them the essential senses of self-discipline, self-esteem, respect for others and their property, and allegiance to their local communities.

1.2 It is in the best interests of Management, Teachers, Parents/ Guardians and Students to have an effective and fair Code of Behaviour to enable all the interested Education Partners to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

1.3 This Code of Behaviour was approved by the Board of Management after consultation with the parents, students and staff of Scoil Mhuire.

## **2. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

2.1 Provides clarity on expectations in order to help make the school a good, orderly and harmonious place for teaching and learning.

2.2 It affirms that everyone's behaviour matters in creating a positive school based on mutual respect, where all students can realize their full potential. In particular it recognizes that the quality of relationship between teacher and student is a powerful influence on behaviour in the school.

2.3 The focus is on promoting good behaviour.

2.4 The code balances the educational needs of those whose behaviour is unacceptable against the educational needs of the other students attending the school.

## **3. AIMS**

3.1 In line with the mission statement it is the function of the discipline structure in Scoil Mhuire to teach students to respect the dignity of each person and to develop their own sense of worth and self esteem.

3.2 It fits into the school aim where all students are expected to strive for excellence in all their pursuits whether academic or non academic.

3.3 Scoil Mhuire seeks to provide a disciplined atmosphere in which students can work and develop their talents to the best of their abilities.

3.4 It is the responsibility of the school, through the members of the teaching staff, to see that the sanctions and rewards are applied consistently but fairly.

#### **4. GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

4.1 "Authority within the classroom rests with the teacher in charge of the classroom". Authority outside, within the school environs, rests with all staff. In the exercise of that authority school management will ensure that:

- (i) the Code of Behaviour is interpreted and administered in a fair and just manner
- (ii) written procedures for the administration of the behaviour/disciplinary process are available and monitored

4.2 To facilitate the implementation of this code, Parents/Guardians are expected to take a full and positive interest in all aspects of school life as it impacts on the students

(a) by fully accepting the school rules in writing as set out in the code.

(b) by taking an active interest in their child's progress through school, attending parent/teacher meetings, checking study and homework, and keeping in regular contact with the school authorities.

4.3 Parents/Guardians must send in written explanations of all student absences from school in order to comply with the School Attendance Legislation.

4.4 Parents/Guardians are advised that the school corridors, a number of classrooms and school grounds are all monitored by CCTV, and incidents of student indiscipline may be recorded and used in evidence when and where necessary.

#### **5. Rewards**

5.1 Scoil Mhuire endeavours to reward good behaviour. Among the methods used are;

- Positive affirmation in the classroom by the teacher.
- Public affirmation by school management.
- A student awards system (merits) has been developed in the school that rewards and promotes good behaviour.
- There are student awards for students in each year. Subject teachers nominate students in each subject area. Each nominated student receives a certificate.
- Students who have excelled at different extra curricular activities also receive awards.
- Awards ceremony at end of school year, where the recipient receives the award in front of their peers.

#### **6. STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

6.1 Internal Classroom Discipline is the responsibility of the subject teacher. The teacher will work and to ensure that the student understands the importance and necessity for student discipline and punctuality.

6.2.1 Incidents of indiscipline can be dealt with by a word of caution, reasonable and non-repetitive additions to homework, detention and incident sheets.

6.3 A student will not be excluded from class unless the disruption caused by him/ her is such as to make it impossible for the teacher to continue teaching. If a student must be excluded from class the following procedure is followed:

- (a) The class teacher should contact the deputy principal giving details of the incident.
- (b) The student will then be referred to the Year Head at a convenient agreed time.
- (c) Under no circumstances will a student be left standing unsupervised outside the classroom door.

6.4 In the event of a very serious breach of discipline, the subject /class teacher will refer the incident to the Principal. All referrals will be accompanied by a written report, giving precise details of what occurred. The teacher will also report the incident to the student's Year Head.

6.5 Members of the teaching staff will explain the school Code of Behaviour to the student body at appropriate intervals and will ensure that 'The School Rules' are complied with by all students.

## **7. BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS**

- 7.1 Good manners are expected of students at all times.
- 7.2 Students are expected to have a positive attitude towards class work and homework.
- 7.3 Books and equipment must be brought to class.
- 7.4 Students must maintain a Homework Journal which may be checked by Tutor / Parents/Guardians.
- 7.5 Disrespect or disruption during class work will not be tolerated. If such behaviour makes teaching impossible the student will be removed from class until such attitude changes.
- 7.6 Students must be punctual and required homework must be completed.
- 7.7 Pupils should assemble quietly outside classroom door until teacher allows them to enter.
- 7.8 Pupils use the desk and chair assigned in each particular room.
- 7.9 Rough or boisterous behaviour is forbidden.
- 7.10 Inside the school students walk and never run and keep to the left-hand side at all times.
- 7.11 Students should not go to lockers during class time. Lockers or racks must be used for school bags at all times. Bags left on corridors will be confiscated
- 7.12 Parents/Guardians must explain all absences in writing to the Tutor.
- 7.13 Students must remain in the school grounds from 8.45 a.m. to 3.45 p.m. daily.
- 7.14 Requests to leave school during school hours must be made in advance by a note in the student journal from Parents/Guardians to Tutor. Phoning from the office is not acceptable unless a student is feeling unwell.
- 7.15 Only a student whose Parents/Guardians has completed a Lunch Period Indemnity Form will be allowed home at lunchtime.

- 7.16 Student's property must carry his or her name. Management accepts no responsibility for lost/stolen property.
- 7.17 Crisps, popcorn and high energy drinks, e.g. Red Bull are forbidden.
- 7.18 Each student must be dressed neatly in full school uniform including school outings and State Exams.
- 7.19 All students must be neat and tidy. Boys must be clean-shaven.
- 7.20 Pupils should use litterbins for disposal of litter.
- 7.21 Chewing gum is forbidden in the school environment.
- 7.22 Mobile phones are not allowed in the school without the written permission of the Principal.
- 7.23 All personal electronic devices such as iPods must be powered off and put away during class, if not a teacher may confiscate the device.
- 7.24 All students must wear the official school jacket . No other coats, jackets, fleeces or hoodies are allowed.
- 7.25 Natural hair colours only allowed.
- 7.26 Refusal to do detention / pay fines will carry a suspension.
- 7.27 The following Major breaches will not be tolerated and carry a suspension:

➤ Failure to respect the authority of teachers.	• Unauthorised absence from class / school
➤ Refusal to do as told by school staff.	• Damage to property
➤ Use of offensive language.	• Fighting
➤ Bullying	• Smoking
➤ Possession of Alcohol or Drugs	• Assault on person
➤ Gross misbehaviour on school activities.	• Possession of weapons.

7.28 Parents/Guardians and Students are expected to be familiar with the terms of:

- (i) School Anti-bullying Policy,
- (ii) Mobile Telephone policy.
- (ii) Student use of I.C.T. – Acceptable Use Policy
- (iii) Jewellery/Accessories/Grooming policy.

Copies of these school policies may be found in the Student Diary or copies may be obtained from the school office.

## **8. RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

8.1 In addressing inappropriate behaviour by students an agreed ladder of intervention will be adopted. This will allow for consistency among staff and ensures there is a planned approach to assisting students change their own behaviour. School authorities will use the school Pastoral Care resources including the individual Class Subject Teacher, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, School Chaplain, as appropriate, to assist the student. At all times communications are critical between the school and home.

8.2 Students who cause discipline problems in classes are dealt with initially under the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour and detailed in the 'Student Journal'. However, students who are persistently disruptive may be suspended from the school and the parent/guardian will be expected to attend school to discuss the problem. .

8.3.1 Students, whose general conduct is of concern to the School Authorities, will not be allowed to represent the school on teams or allowed on class, group or year outings.

## **9. SANCTIONS**

9.1 The objectives of sanctions are to help a student to learn. The purpose is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping students to :

To learn that their behaviour is unacceptable

- To recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- To understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.

9.2 A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the Code of behaviour
- signal to other students and staff that their well-being is being protected.

9.3 In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

9.4 Interventions which may require specific sanctions being imposed, depending on the seriousness of the behaviour, are as follows:

- Student warned by Teacher
- Referral of student for pastoral guidance/support
- Student is reported to Year Head and given formal warning
- The use of a Progress Sheets and Student Contracts
- Communication with parents/guardians by Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Student put on detention before, during or after school.
- Letter to Parents/Guardians by Deputy Principal/Principal.

- Referral to external specialist for professional support (NEPS, HSE etc)
- Suspension
- Expulsion

## **10. MISDEMEANOURS**

10.1 Student sanctions may be applied by teachers, supervisors, class teachers and year heads when misdemeanours occur. These include isolated breaches of school regulations or petty classroom infringements relating to class-work, homework, general order and discipline, littering etc. The sanctions may include

- Changing seating arrangements in class
- Isolation within the classroom
- Removal from class for brief periods under supervision
- Relevant written work such as essays, transcription etc.
- Detention under school procedures
- Use of Incident Sheet.
- Chores within the school building and grounds, picking up litter, cleaning windows, desks, etc.

### **10.2 Classroom Teacher**

The classroom teacher will in the first instance deal with any breach of classroom discipline. For minor infringements (e.g. no books, late, no journal, talking in class) it is sufficient for a teacher to reprimand the student or use other measures such as extra work and detention at lunchtime.

10.3 Teachers should record breaches as they occur. Record keeping is necessary so that a pupil profile can be built up. Teachers may complete an incident sheet on individual students at any time but it is suggested that one must be filled in if a student has three instances of minor breaches.

### **10.4 Chewing Gum**

Students found chewing gum will be given early morning detention.

### **10.5 Absences**

Students who are found to be absent from school without leave (mitching) will be suspended from the school for two days. Students who leave the school during the day, for any reason, are expected to sign out detailing their reason for leaving after presenting a note of explanation. Students who fail to comply with this instruction will be deemed absent from school without permission.

### **10.6 Getting out of Class**

Students should have the written permission of teachers in their school journal if they are out of class. The journal should be carried at all times.

### **10.7 Students Late**

Students who are late may receive an early morning detention and notification in the school journal.

## **11. CONTINUOUS MISBEHAVIOUR**

11.1 Sanctions and procedures to be followed in the case of continuous misbehaviour such as:-

- Disruption of classes
- Bullying or harassment of other students
- Offensive language
- Theft within the school
- Any behaviour disruptive to the smooth running of the school.
- Students who are in constant breach of School Uniform Regulations, without satisfactory explanation, may be suspended from the school.

11.2 When the behaviour is repeated or is of a more serious nature, the class teacher will complete an incident sheet and refer the matter to the year head. The Year head will counsel, reprimand or impose a sanction on the student as appropriate. Sanctions may include placing the student on detention, contacting parents, inviting parents to visit the school.

11.3 The student should be warned formally by the year head that repeated misbehaviour will bring further sanction which may include suspension. At the discretion of the Year Head/Deputy Principal the student may be given some punishment such as detention, school chores or brief internal suspension.

- The student may be placed on an progress sheet.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified by phone or in writing that the behaviour of the student is giving cause for concern and invited to the school to discuss the matter.
- When the above procedures have been followed and there is persistent misconduct or where there is a once-off incident of a very serious nature the matter should be referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

Should the misbehaviour continue the Year Head may recommend to the Principal that the student be suspended for up to five days.

- The Parents will be informed in writing by the Principal or Deputy Principal that the student is being suspended , and invited to discuss the matter further with a view to facilitating a change in attitude by the student.

11.4 Before re-admission the Parents and student may be asked to meet with the Year

Head/Principal/Deputy Principal or any grouping of those and assurances of good behaviour will be required for the future.

11.5 Failure to respond to one or more suspensions under this procedure may render the student liable to suspension of more than five days. In such a case the procedures for sanction under serious misbehaviour will apply.

## **12. SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR**

12.1 Sanctions and procedures in the case of serious misbehaviour warranting instant suspension and possible expulsion - these sanctions and procedures would apply in the instance of serious misbehaviour such as:

- Serious assault on the person of, or serious damage to the property of, one student by another.
- Malicious damage to property. Students who wilfully damage school property will be responsible for full reinstatement of the damaged property.
- Possession, distribution or use of drugs prohibited by law.
- Assault on, threat to, or damage to property of, or abuse of a teacher by a student.
- Possession or use of fireworks/weapons.
- Gross misbehaviour on school related activities or any misbehaviour of a similar serious nature to the list above.
- Failure to respect the authority of teachers
- Refusal to do as told by school staff.
- Use of abusive language.
- Possession of alcohol.
- Unauthorised absence from class / school.
- Fighting
- Smoking
- Sexting

By misbehaviour of this type the student renders herself/himself liable to instant suspension and probable further action by the school. Instant suspension obliges the school to ensure that the pupil passes into the care and supervision of Parent/Guardian.

## **13. ONLINE PRIVACY**

Circulating publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

Sexting is the sharing of sexual text, video, and photographic content using mobile phones, apps social networking service and other internet technologies. The sharing of explicit text, images and/or



video, is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour and will have serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

**Please note that:**

- All incidents involving creating, storing, or sharing of explicit text, images and/ or video of children under the age of 17 years will be reported as an incident to the Gardai and Tusla and the State Claims Agency (to the latter as there is the potential to cause injury/harm to the individual).
- Sharing of explicit text, images and/ or videos of pupils in the school will incur serious sanctions including suspension and up to expulsions as determined by the Board of Management.

#### **14. SMOKING**

14.1 Smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes) is prohibited in the school and its environs. Students found smoking may be suspended for five days. Parents will be informed of any student who is caught smoking while at school or on school outings.

14.2 The above list of sanctions does not preclude the school authorities from imposing other sanctions which may become necessary and/or appropriate from time to time.

#### **15. SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS**

15.1 Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, international Conventions and Case law.

15.2 Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- the right to be heard
- the right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
- the right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account
- the right to know how the issue will be decided
- the right to respond to the allegations
- where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision making body and the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts
- the right to impartiality
- the right to an absence of bias in the decision maker
- the right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision making

15.3 When the normal disciplinary procedures of the school have been exhausted, the sanction of suspension may become necessary. Suspension may be deemed necessary for a single serious instance of misbehaviour or for repeated instances of less serious misbehaviour.

15.4 Suspension should be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension should:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents/guardians
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions and
- impress on a student and his/her parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

15.5 The forms of suspension may include immediate suspension, automatic and suspension during a state examination. Students and their parents/guardians will be kept fully informed and given an opportunity to respond throughout the suspension process. All will be advised of the duration of the suspension keeping in mind the appeal mechanism available to parents/guardians under Section 29, Education Act 1998 and as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 2007. The school will keep on file all records of investigation and decision making processes. The Board of Management will be notified of all student suspensions with the reasons for and duration of each suspension. The school Principal will report suspensions in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines and in compliance with the requirements of Section 21 (4) (a), Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

15.6 The following guidelines apply to suspension:

- All instances of misbehaviour by students which are reported to a Year Head should be documented by the teacher making the complaint. The student must be informed that a complaint is registered in his behavioural record by the Year Head.
- If there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour by a student his or her parents or guardians will be informed by registered letter. This letter will request them to meet the Principal and Teacher/Year - head at the school at an acceptable time. Every effort will be made at this meeting to get them to give an undertaking that the student will behave in an acceptable manner in future. Where it is appropriate the student will be required to give a similar undertaking. The parents or guardians will be informed that in the event of further instances of misbehaviour the student will be considered for suspension for a specified time.
- If Parents/Guardians fail to attend for this meeting and without a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the student will be suspended. The Parents/Guardians will be informed immediately, by telephone or registered letter, of the impending suspension and of their right to appeal.
- In the case of all suspensions the Board of Management will be informed. School practices are in line with The Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

- Where a student is guilty of a gross misbehaviour, the Principal will sanction an immediate suspension pending a discussion with the Parents/Guardians who will then be informed by letter and invited to the school, to discuss the matter.
- If they fail to attend the school or provide a reasonable explanation for not doing so, the pupil can remain suspended pending consideration of the case by the Board of Management. The Parents/Guardians will be informed of this by registered post.
- When a satisfactory resolution to the case is achieved, the pupil will be re-admitted to the school, This may be done on a phased basis.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed of their right to appeal a suspension decision by the Board of Management.
- Students who have been suspended during the year may, at the discretion of the school, be refused permission to attend school organised activities, e.g. school tours, trips, trips etc.

## **16. PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION OF STUDENTS**

16.1 The Board of Management alone has the authority to expel a student from Scoil Mhuire Community School. It is a function of the Board of Management to ensure that expulsion is an appropriate response to the student's behaviour.

16.2 The Board of Management will deliberate on the following factors before deciding to expel or not a student from the school:

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour,
- the context of the behaviour,
- the impact of the behaviour,
- the interventions (if any) tried to date,
- whether expulsion is a proportionate response,
- the possible impact of expulsion.

16.3 The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Community School is required to follow fair procedures (see those outline above for student suspension).

16.4 The following procedural steps will be adopted by the Board of Management:

- a detailed investigation has been undertaken under direction of Principal
- a recommendation by the Principal to the Board of Management
- consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
- Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer
- Confirmation of the decision to expel or other decision reached.

16.5 At all times throughout the process Parents/Guardians will be kept fully apprised of all developments and be given full details of all records gathered that are relevant to the expulsion proposal.

The Principal of Scoil Mhuire Community School will provide to the Parent/Guardian of the student who is recommended for expulsion, a copy of the planned procedures that will be followed, In respect of the expulsion process

16.6 Once a pupil enters the school he/she is subject to the discipline of the school and is entitled to remain as a pupil only as long as he/she accepts and obeys the discipline and rules of the school.

## **DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Code of Behaviour and agree to abide by it.

Students Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Code of Behaviour and accept that my son / daughter must abide by it.

Parents / Guardians Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**(Please detach this agreement and return to the school)**

