

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Introductory Statement: This policy is currently being formulated between parents, staff and members of the B.O.M. It is being drawn up in response to legislative requirements (Education Welfare Act 2000) and the practical requirements of the school.

Rationale: The purpose of this policy is to ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, N.E.W.B. 2008.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School: Whitehall N.S. is concerned with the spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual development of the child, values diversity and respect, in a supportive environment, in partnership with parents, parish and community.

Aims:

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of Whitehall National School. The aim of the school's disciplinary policy sets out to achieve the following.

1. The efficient operation of the school and the structure of in-class discipline to allow for an efficient and stimulating learning environment.
2. The maintenance of good order throughout the school and respect for the school environment.
3. The development of self-discipline and training in positive patterns based on consideration, respect and tolerance of others.

Principles:

1. In drawing up this policy the school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences.
2. 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 between B.O.M., staff, parents and pupils.
3. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair, consistent manner.

Parents:

1. All parents will be provided with a copy of the code and asked to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall ensure compliance with such code by their child. Failure to comply will lead to sanctions.
2. Parents are expected to ensure their child's regular punctual attendance, encourage their children to do their best, assist with homework, provide necessary learning materials, attend meetings at the school if requested.

Teachers:

1. Positive in-class strategies will be used to manage behaviour effectively.
2. New teachers will be apprised of the contents of the Code of Behaviour.
3. The principles of the Code are supported by the Primary Curriculum and will be taught through S.P.H.E., S.E.S.E., Religion as a whole school approach.

Guidelines for Behaviour in General Throughout the School: These are set out in compliance with the requirements of the Educ. Welfare Act 2000 in this Code of Discipline.

Pupils

Courtesy: All pupils are expected to treat staff and their fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of bad language is unacceptable. Bullying by word or action will be regarded as a serious offence. Children are encouraged to be truthful and honest at all times.

Punctuality: Pupils are expected to be punctual and regular in attendance. Parents should ensure that children are collected from school on time. School begins at 9 20a.m. and finishes at 3 00 p.m. Infant classes finish at 2 00 p.m. daily.

Personal Property: Children are required to have their names on all items of school clothing, coats, school books, lunch boxes and any property of value.

School Property: Pupils must respect school property and treat computers, rental books, toilets, furniture, equipment and the school environment with due care.

Mobile Phones: Children are not allowed to have mobile phones in school. If a parent needs to contact a child during school hours, the parent may do so by ringing the school.

Environment: Pupils must co-operate in keeping the school environment clean and free from litter. Children must have a lunch box clearly marked, and all lunch or food wrapping, drink containers etc. must be disposed of at home.

Homework: Homework should be done consistently to the best of the child's ability and written work should be presented neatly. If a child has persistent difficulty with homework or is spending too much time at it, please make an appointment with the class teacher and discuss.

School Uniform: The school uniform of navy jumper/cardigan, white shirt/blouse/t-shirt with collar, navy trousers/skirt/pinafore must be worn daily.

Accidents and Injuries:

1. In the case of serious accidents or illness the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If unavailable, professional medical advice will be sought.
2. In the case of minor cuts or bruises, wounds will be washed and cleaned. If deemed serious enough parents will be informed as soon as possible.

Guidelines for In Class Behaviour:

1. Pupils should have all books and materials required.
2. Children are expected to work to the best of their ability and present written work neatly.
3. Children are expected to show consideration and respect for fellow pupils and to follow their teacher's instructions as given, in order to allow effective learning programmes to be implemented.
4. Any form of disruption or interference with the rights of other children to participate, is unacceptable.
5. Children are not permitted to leave the classroom or yard without permission, under any circumstances.

General Guidelines for Out of Class Behaviour:

1. Pupils must behave in an orderly manner at all times and in the interests of safety must "walk" from one class area to another, and in cloakrooms and toilets.
2. At break times children are under the supervision of a designated teacher, who will ensure, to the best of his/her ability that safety standards are observed. The instructions of the supervisory must be obeyed implicitly. Pupils are required to line up in an orderly manner at the end of break.
3. On wet days, children remain in their classrooms for breaks and may play games, read etc. but safety procedures as directed by the class teacher must be followed.
4. Children should bring a healthy nutritious lunch. Chewing gum is absolutely forbidden.
5. In the interest of safety, only one pupil per class is permitted to use the toilets at the same time.

Rewards and Sanctions: The school places a greater emphasis on rewards.

Strategies Employed to Encourage Good Behaviour:

- A quiet word or gesture of approval
- A positive comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class or assembly
- A system of merit marks e.g. Star Chart
- Delegation of some special duty or privilege
- Commendation to parent - written or verbal communication.
- An individual, group, class or school treat.

Disapproval of Unacceptable Behaviour may be dealt with by way of Sanctions. The degree of misdemeanour i.e. minor, serious, gross, will be judged by the teachers or principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

- Reasoning with pupils
- Reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Prescribing extra work
- Temporary separation from peers, friends, others.
- Loss of privileges
- "Time out" during a school break
- Referral to Principal Teacher
- Communication with Parents

Examples of Minor Misdemeanours : might include the following but this list is not exhaustive.

- Talking in class
- Homework incomplete consistently
- Bickering in class or on the yard
- Being discourteous in manner
- Being inattentive
- Ignoring instructions
- Littering, placing unfinished food, drinks cartons in the bin

Such instances may be dealt with by way of verbal reprimand/reasoning with the pupil or noting instances of misbehaviour with a view to informing parents of such behaviour persists.

Examples of action to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of Minor Misdemeanour - Phase One (within the classroom)

- Pupil / teacher may write an account of what happened
- Note sent home to be signed by parent
- Temporary separation from peers
- Temporary loss of privileges
- "Time out" during break
- Additional work prescribed
- Carrying out a useful task in the school

Phase Two:

- Referral to another teacher / Principal
- Class teacher meets one / both parents
- Principal meets one / both parents

Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:

- Consistently disruptive in class, interfering with the rights of others to participate
- Being discourteous consistently
- Using unacceptable language
- Endangering the health and safety of others
- Bullying (see anti-bullying policy)

Examples of action to be taken when dealing with Serious Misdemeanours:

- Send to deputy principal or principal
- Principal sends note in home-work diary to be signed by parents
- Principal meets with one or both parents
- Formal report to the Board of Management
- Chairperson of Board of management informed and parents are requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours: might include the following but are not intended to cover every possibility.

- Using threatening, verbal or physical aggression towards a fellow pupil or member of staff
- Smoking/taking alcohol or drugs to school (see Substance Use policy)
- Deliberately damaging, destroying or setting fire to school property
- Deliberately interfering with the infrastructure by deliberately leaving taps on
- Bringing weapons to school
- Interfering with fire extinguishers
- Burglary of school premises

Management of Problem Behaviour: In cases where a pattern of problematic behaviour emerges the following steps will apply.

- The class teacher will discuss the child's behaviour with the parent to discuss co-operative strategies through which the child's behaviour may improve
- The child depending on the circumstances may be invited to participate in the meeting at some point to reinforce positive participation

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- Problematic behaviour will be monitored by the class teacher and principal and parents will be encouraged to keep in touch with the school via homework diary, phone, parent teacher meetings, by appointment.
- In certain circumstances the class teacher or principal will seek parental consent for assessment. (e.g. psychological, speech and language, clinical, medical assessment).

Management of Aggressive or Violent Behaviour:

- Children experiencing serious emotional and behavioural problems will be referred immediately for psychological assessment
- External agencies such as H.S.E., NEPS, will be contacted. Appropriate support resources will be sought through the office of the Special Education Needs Organiser.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil themselves or that of other pupils or staff, the child's parents/guardian will be asked by the principal to remove the child immediately pending further action by the B.O.M.

Examples of action to be taken when dealing with Gross Misdemeanours:

- Chairperson /Principal will sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
- Expulsion will be considered in extreme cases

Suspensions and Expulsions:

A proposal to exclude a student, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted by very serious misbehaviour.

1. Fair procedures, incorporating the right to be heard and the right to impartiality will be followed by the school.
2. The B.O.M. has the authority to suspend a student.
3. The B.O.M may delegate this authority to the Principal in consultation with the Chairman in extreme circumstances when it is not feasible to convene a B.O.M. meeting at short notice.

Grounds for Suspension:

- 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

Procedures in Respect of Suspension: The school will inform the student and their parents about the complaint which could possibly lead to suspension and give the parents and the student an opportunity to respond before any decision is made or sanction is imposed.

Procedures in Relation to Immediate Suspension: Parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.

Period of Suspension: A student will not be suspended for more than three days. In exceptional circumstances the B.O.M. with the approval of the Chairperson, may authorise the Principal to impose a sanction of up to five days, where a meeting of the

B.O.M. cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The B.O.M. will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension.

Appeals: Where a pupil has been suspended for twenty days or more, in the one school year, this may be the subject of appeal under Educ. Act, Section 29. This must be appealed within forty two days. Parents will be informed how to proceed.

Implementing the Suspension: The parents will receive written notification confirming,

1. The dates on which the suspension begins and ends
2. The reasons for suspension
3. Any study programme to be followed
4. The arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be fulfilled by student and parents
5. Provision for an appeal to the B.O.M.
6. The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Educ & Science (Educ Act '98 Sect 29)

Removal of Suspension: Suspension may be lifted at the decision of the B.O.M. or at the direction of the Secretary General of the Dept. of Educ. & Science on appeal under Educ. Act '98 Sect. 29 a period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification of suspension. On return to school, the pupil will be encouraged and supported in a fresh start.

Records and Reports: Formal written report will be kept of:

1. The investigation
2. The decision- making process
3. The decision and the rationale for the decision
4. The duration of the suspension any conditions attached to the suspension

Expulsion: The B.O.M. will implement expulsion in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour on foot of grounds such as:

- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

Expulsion will follow on foot of serious misdemeanour when the school has tried other interventions and believes it has exhausted all possibilities of changing the pupil's behaviour. Factors to be considered as outlined in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" (pg 82) will be taken into consideration before proposing to expel a pupil.

Expulsion for a First Offence: The kind of behaviour which might incur expulsion on the basis of a single breach of the code may include:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or staff member
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs or substances to other pupils in the school
- Sexual assault

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion: In compliance with Education (Welfare) Act '00, the following procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out by the Principal
2. A recommendation to the B.O.M. by the Principal
3. Consideration by the B.O.M. of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing
4. B.O.M. deliberations and notification of Educ. Welfare Officer
5. Consultations arranged by the Educ. Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. A proposal to expel a pupil requires serious grounds, such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or 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 school property

In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management may expel a student for a single incident of serious inappropriate behaviour. Examples of such serious misconduct might be

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Violence or physical assault
- Serious threat to the health and safety of others

Before expulsion is considered, the school will have made significant efforts to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion e.g. meeting with pupil and parents, ensure pupils understand the consequences of behaviour, the assistance of support agencies.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary investigation of the facts confirms serious behaviour that could warrant suspension, the procedural steps will include:

- 1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.**
Parents will be informed in writing and given the opportunity to respond.
A meeting with parents and student will be arranged to address the issue.
- 2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.**
The Principal will inform parents that the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.
Parent and BOM will be provided with comprehensive records concerning the incident.
A hearing will be arranged by the BOM.
Parents will be invited to make a written and oral submission to the BOM
- 3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.**
The BOM will review the initial investigation to ensure fair procedures were applied.
A hearing is held at which the Principal and parents are invited to make submissions.

The Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberation.

Further, the BOM will ensure that any member of the BOM who may have a conflicting interest will be excused and not participate in the decision.

The student may need to stand suspended from school pending the decision of the BOM.

4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

If the BOM decide not to expel, it is a matter for the Board to decide on what conditions, if any, the student will be allowed back to school.

If the BOM decide to impose expulsion, the Board will notify with Education Welfare Officer of its decision and the reasons for its decision.

A student shall not be considered expelled before the passing of twenty school days from the receipt of such notification by the Education Welfare Officer. The student will remain suspended for the twenty days until the Expulsion Order takes effect.

The Board of Management will inform the parents in writing of its conclusions and the next steps in the process including the informing of the Educational Welfare Officer.

5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Within twenty days the Education Welfare Officer must make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the principal, parents and student and others if relevant. He/she should convene a meeting and make provision for the continuing education of the student involved.

6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

When the twenty day period has elapsed and where the Board of Management remains of the decision to expel, the Board of Management will formally confirm its decision to expel. Parents will be notified immediately by registered letter, that the expulsion will now proceed. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against the decision to expel a student.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

A copy of Circular 22/02 and the relevant forms will be forwarded to parents - Appendix F.

An appeal may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Officer on behalf of the student. (Education Act 1998, Section 29)

The Board of Management will review its use of expulsion to ensure its appropriateness.

Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences from School: In accordance with Educ. Welfare Act '00, Section 23,

- Parents must notify the school in **writing** of a student's absence and the **reason for this absence**. Letters must be signed and dated and will be retained for one school year. Details of pupil absence in excess of twenty school days must be reported by the school to the N.E.W.B.

Reference to Other Policies: The following policies have a bearing on the code of behaviour: S.P.H.E., Anti-Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Enrolment, Record keeping, Home/School Links, Health & Safety, Equality, Special Educational Needs, Curricular Policies.

Ratification: This policy has been ratified by the B.O.M. of Whitehall N.S.

Signature: ----- **Date:** -----

Parents' Acceptance of Code of Behaviour

We, ----- parents/guardians (delete as appropriate)

have read this Code of Behaviour, accept its contents and undertake to encourage our child/children ----- to comply with it.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: -----

Date: -----

SCHOOL RULES

Golden Rules:

Children cannot remember long lists of rules. The rules outlined in this policy provide clear guidelines for members of our school community and senior pupils as to what type of behaviour is expected of pupils and adults within our school. Our rules are on display throughout the school. These rules synopsis for the children what is expected of them, in a language they understand. Children from Junior Infants - 6th classes will be reminded of these rules and will recite them and discuss them regularly. It is expected that the children will know them 'by rote' by the time they reach second class.

Bí ann, bí in am agus bí gleasta
Kind hands, kind words, kind feet
Raise your hand
Follow instructions straight away
Work quietly