



Scoil Mhuire, Latton Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan

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Code of Behaviour

Introduction

In our school, we foster a whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps to form a strong school community and co-operation among pupils, staff and parents alike. Our Code of Behaviour is based on the premise that all children are good. We try to encourage and promote acceptable forms of behaviour each day in the class, in the school building and on the yard and in all school activities.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour within the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Vision for Scoil Mhuire

To work together as a community to provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment where children are motivated to learn, are valued as individuals and through a holistic educational experience are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Aims of Our Code of Behaviour

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To help organise a large group of children so as to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- 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 and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Guidelines for Good Behaviour

Encouraging high standards of behaviour among pupils and creating and maintaining an orderly atmosphere for learning in the school involves a whole school approach. Teachers explain the code of behaviour on a regular basis, teaching children the importance of

respect for self and others. This results in positive relationships between staff and pupils, leading to effective teaching and learning.

Responsibilities of Adults

The adults encountered by the pupils in our school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour as their example has an important influence on the pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

- To support, implement and review the school's Code of Behaviour.
- To model, promote, recognise and affirm high standards of behaviour.
- To create a safe working environment for pupils.
- To communicate in a positive and appropriate manner.
- To use best practices in classroom management and planning, thus keeping opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- To encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- To deal appropriately with misbehaviour in a fair and consistent manner.
- To keep records of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- To communicate with pupils and parents when necessary and provide feedback on matters of mutual concern.

Roles and Responsibilities of Parents

- To encourage children to have respect for themselves and others and their property
- To ensure that children attend school regularly with appropriate lunch and materials and are punctual
- To take an interest in, support and encourage their child's schoolwork
- To communicate with the school in relation to any concerns, which may affect their child's progress/behaviour

Pupils' Responsibilities

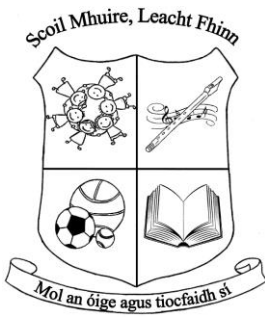
Model of Behaviour expected from each pupil:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults in what they say and what they do.
- Each pupil is expected to listen to his/her teacher and act on instructions/advice.
- 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 work both in school and for homework.

Behaviour in the School Environment

All people using the school premises are expected to walk within the school building as running in a corridor or classroom is extremely hazardous (Health & Safety Act 1989).

- Classes have been designated specific play areas on the yard and should play within these areas. In this way the children should feel safe and secure since they are playing with their own age group.
- During spells of inclement weather (e.g. on very wet days or frosty/snow days) the children will remain in their classrooms during break-times. They may play games



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- (board games, etc.), read books, play cards, watch a program or simply have a chat.
- Pupils must not delay on the yard after the school bell

- The pupils are required to take litter home. We hope in this way to foster an appreciation for our environment.
- Pupils are requested to wear our school uniform and sensible footwear.

Classroom

- The children should complete their homework in full. When it is finished it must be signed by a parent. If for any reason the work is incomplete or if any difficulties arise, parents should inform the class teacher.
- Inattention or bad manners towards teachers or other pupils cannot be allowed. (Respect for others forms the basis of good behaviour).
- Inappropriate classroom behaviour includes:
 - * Persistent talking
 - * Upsetting other children during structured activities.
 - * Refusal to obey instructions.
 - * Interrupting class.
 - * Failure to complete homework or school classroom tasks.
 - * Truancy
 - * Persistently late for class - School day begins at 9.20am.

It is expected at all times that school property and equipment will be treated with respect and the defacing of such is forbidden.

Each teacher will operate a reward system within their classroom by way of acknowledging and encouraging good behaviour.

Physical Activities

- For obvious reasons of hygiene and comfort, children are required to wear suitable clothing and footwear for P.E.
- To avoid accidents the children should not swing on basketball stands, goal posts or gates/railings/fences.
- Polite language is expected from pupils and swearing is considered to be misbehaviour.
- All jewellery to be removed for games. Pupils are not to wear make-up at school.

Rewards Systems

The use of praise and rewards for good behaviour is actively promoted within the school. We aim to help children achieve their personal best- academically, intellectually and socially. We seek to use encouragement for all children to attain their own best in accordance with their ability. Some examples of strategies employed to recognise and promote positive behaviour includes

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a child's written work
- A visit to another member of staff or the Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group
- Individual class merit award, points award or stamp award
- Delegating some special privilege or responsibility
- Written or verbal communication to parent

Sanctions

The following steps will be taken when pupils behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity. The list is non-exhaustive. The aim of any sanction is to prevent any behaviour from re-occurring and if necessary to help the pupil to devise strategies for improved behaviour. The particular stage used will depend on the nature or seriousness of the behaviour.

1. Reasoning with pupil - advice on how to behave.
2. Reprimand (e.g. Yellow/Red Card).
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
4. Loss of privileges.
5. Supervised detention during a break (detention room).
6. Communication with parents
7. Referral to principal.
8. Exclusion from school outings/privileged activities
9. Suspension
10. Expulsion

Yellow/Red Card System.

A yellow and red card sanction system will operate within the school

This system will operate as follows:

- Staff member will draw child's attention for minor misbehaviours, if this occurs again a verbal warning will be issued.
- Children will receive a yellow card for persistent less serious misbehaviours and breaches of the school rules. A yellow card will act as a warning/caution against future misbehaviour.
- Three yellow cards mean that a child then receives a red card.
- For more serious misbehaviours children will receive an automatic red card.
- A red card means that children receive detention i.e. they must remain inside at lunch break after they have eaten their lunch, to do extra work.

In a situation where a child is habitually offending and receive multiple detentions over a short period of time, further sanctions will apply whereby privileges and rewards are withdrawn.

Suspension/Expulsion Procedures

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a Code of Behaviour shall specify the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned, and the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student. Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

Suspension

The principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer, by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.

Circular 20/90 states that "Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated."

Suspension may be employed in instances of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, e.g. where a pupil poses a risk to themselves, other pupils or staff. The Board of Management has authorised the Principal or the Chairperson to suspend a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

Where there are repeated cases of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend a meeting with the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not undertake that the pupil will behave appropriately in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard for evidence of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any other relevant information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parents must give a satisfactory undertaking that the suspended pupil will behave in alignment with the Code of Behaviour and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of others in the school. The parents, pupil, teacher and principal will meet to formulate a new "Contract of Good Behaviour". This is signed by all parties and the child shall endeavour to act accordingly.

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 "*A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer*" (Section 24(4)). It is the right of the 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))

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills 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, the school will advise parents 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 parents.

Parents are informed in writing by the Board of Management of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion.

The Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Department of Education and Skills (Circular 22/2002).

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff, pupils and parents have been established and are reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (past or present), which may affect a child's behaviour.

As a proactive strategy in preventing the escalation or re-occurrence of misbehaviours, teachers may communicate instances of misbehaviour with parents via the pupil's homework journal as and when an issue first arises. Observations in relation to pupil behaviour are reported to all parents at the pupil's Parent-Teacher meeting and recorded in the pupil's end of year report.

Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences 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 the parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

In the case of a pupil absence, parents are requested to send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. Parents should sign and date the notes and they are retained in the school until the end of the academic year in question.

Túsla, the Child and Family Agency are informed when a pupil's absences reaches 20 days per school year. Scoil Mhuire uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to Túsla.

Other School Plans/Policies which have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour

- Whole School Plan for Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.)
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement (formerly Child Protection Policy)
- Health & Safety Statement
- Sports Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Attendance and Participation Strategy
- Parental Involvement Policy

Conclusion

The essence of our Code of Behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self-discipline.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 7th March 2018. It will be reviewed again in March 2021.

Scoil Mhuire Code of Behaviour

Please read the Code of Behaviour and return this form (signed) to the school as soon as possible.

I have read the Scoil Mhuire Code of Behaviour.

Parent's/ Guardian's Name: _____

Child's/Children's Name(s): _____

Class/Classes: _____

Date: _____