

## **Code of Behaviour**

This code was prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). It was compiled by staff members with input and consultation from all relevant stakeholders, parent, pupils and the Board of Management. It was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2022.

Section 23 of the [Education \(Welfare\) Act 2000](#), requires the Board of Management of each school to prepare a code of behaviour for its students and to make it available to current students and the parents of current and prospective students. It stipulates that the code of behaviour shall specify:

- (a) the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
- (b) the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
- (c) the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school
- (d) the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
- (e) the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a pupil's absence from school

Furthermore, Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 states that:

- The code of behaviour shall be prepared in accordance with guidelines issued by the [National Educational Welfare Board \(NEWB\)](#).
- Parents as a condition of enrolment of their child in a school, may be required to confirm in writing that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure their child complies with the code of behaviour.

### **Introductory Statement**

Castletown Primary School is a co-educational national school with pupils ranging from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. We currently have five mainstream classes and two Autism classes. A culture of care, concern, support, interest and friendliness has evolved over many years and permeates all aspects of the life and work in Castletown Primary School. We strive in cooperation with the parents to provide a caring and secure environment where each child is encouraged to achieve to the best of his/her ability.

## **Aims**

The aims of the code of behaviour are:

- to create an atmosphere that encourages good behaviour
- to set high expectations for good behaviour
- to create a happy and safe place for teaching and learning
- to encourage students to take personal responsibility for their behaviour
- to build positive relationships and respect among students, parents and staff
- to ensure the standards are clear, consistent and widely known and understood
- that pupils see the code works in a fair way

## **Relationship to vision and ethos of the school**

Our vision for relationships and behaviour in the school is for healthy personal relationships to exist in a safe and secure environment, where every individual is a valued member of our school community taking into account our individual strengths and weaknesses where each individual's dignity is of utmost importance. A positive attitude to discipline is fostered.

Castletown Primary School is a Catholic, co-educational primary school which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy, safe and secure learning environment where intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. We are dedicated to encourage the growth of a love of God and of each other, mutual respect, self-esteem, equality and support for those experiencing difficulty whether academic, emotional or social.

While Castletown Primary School is a school with a Roman Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions. Castletown Primary School will strive to promote, both individually and collectively the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes.

The school collaborates with the home and wider school community with parents as the most important, and essential, partners in the school; such active partnership is necessary to lead young people to the fullness of their potential.

The school's Code of Behaviour reflects the Christian values of forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. The aim is to lead young people progressively from a 'must conscience', which has controlling influences imposed from without, to a 'should conscience' which derives from internalised convictions, freely espoused. The school recognises the dignity and value of each person.

Castletown Primary School will endeavour to enhance the self- esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupil's respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible and honest. Castletown Primary School will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils.

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

### **General Guidelines for promoting positive behaviour**

All pupils are taught the School Rules when they start in Junior Infants and they are revised consistently throughout their remaining years in the school. Parents are given a copy of the rules at registration and they are encouraged and expected to talk to their children about the rules and to encourage their children to keep them.

- a. All members of the school community are expected to treat all adults and pupils with respect and courtesy at all times.
- b. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- c. Pupils are expected to have all books and required materials.
- d. Pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability.

### **How pupils, staff, parents/guardians can help to promote a happy school.**

Happy schools make connections between staff, pupils and parents/guardians an absolute necessity. The happiest schools are the ones that make everyone feel like they belong to a community where they feel welcomed, where they are safe and where they can be themselves.

Schools where humour and light-heartedness are part of the culture are happier places to learn and work because laughter helps build rapport and reduces some of the inevitable stress and tension that comes with teaching, learning and interacting.

Being treated with fairness and respect are fundamentals for a happy school. This is partly about having rules and expectations, with rewards and sanctions that are clear, fair and not too punitive. Fairness is also about being flexible and realistic in your expectations of people.

Happy schools are also cognisant of the wellbeing of the entire school community. They make provision to support pupils, staff and parents/guardians through in-school supports, professional development and information evenings.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the partners in education i.e. the Board of Management, principal and teaching staff, pupils and the parents/guardians of the pupils in Castletown P.S

### **Responsibilities of Board of Management**

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Ratify the code of behaviour.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.

### **Responsibilities of Principal**

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner and arrange for review of the Code, as required.

### **Responsibilities of Teachers**

- Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises and play areas.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.
- All staff members have an important role in supporting the standards of positive behaviour set by the school. Every effort will be made by all members of the staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The Code of Behaviour offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers and SNAs (Special Needs Assistants).
- Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of their pupils, using elements of the curriculum particularly the SPHE (Social & Personal Health Education) curriculum to promote positive behaviour and self-esteem.
- Teachers will promote respectful ways of resolving conflict.
- The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students.
- All existing staff members will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour and new staff members will receive a copy when they begin work with us.
- Rules will be displayed in the classroom at the beginning of the year.

- Children will be reminded of the rules regularly.
- Teachers will re-enforce the rules in the classroom regularly.
- Teachers will use SPHE curriculum to teach and re-enforce the classroom rules.
- Teachers will use the rewards and sanctions as laid out in this policy.

### **Responsibilities of Special Needs Assistants**

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- All staff members have an important role in supporting the standards of positive behaviour set by the school. Every effort will be made by all members of the staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The Code of Behaviour offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by staff members.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or instances of misbehaviour and pass on to the relevant class teacher.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Promote respectful ways of resolving conflict.
- The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students.
- All existing staff members will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour and new staff members will receive a copy when they begin work with us.

### **Role of Pupils**

Pupils are involved in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by:

- Drafting rules for the classroom.
- Reflecting on behaviours and ways of improving behaviour.
- Children are encouraged to take on responsibility to report incidents of concerns that they witness.
- Utilising the Student Council to voice their opinions.
- Taking responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Taking on extra responsibilities to help in the running of the school.
- Pupils will be involved in any monitoring and review of the Code of Behaviour.
- Do one's best in class.
- Attend school regularly and not miss days without good reason.
- Arrive on time.
- Do not leave during the day without permission.
- Respect all school property.
- Wear the school uniform.
- Show respect for yourself and others.

- No swearing, fighting and name calling.
- Listen to messages given and do as requested.
- Participate in school activities.
- Be willing to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
- Keep the school tidy and litter-free.

### **Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians**

Schools need the support of parents with regard to good behaviour and discipline. Parents can help their children in the following ways:

- Parents should provide their children with positive models of behaviour.
- Children need boundaries and rules about behaviour. Talk to your child about school rules. They help make the school a safe place where everyone can learn and nobody feels left out or threatened.
- Ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.
- Be interested in, support and encourage your child's school work.
- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's rules, classroom rules and system of rewards and sanctions.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where your child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Ensure the school has up to date contact information for parents / guardians.
- Ensure an ordered, structured day for your child with regular meal times and bed times.
- Check your child has all their needs for class i.e. books, copies pens, pencils, rubber, ruler, etc.
- Share information with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress / behaviour.
- Parents have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour in their dealings with children, other parents and staff in the school as their example is a powerful source of learning for their own children.

### **School Rules**

The school's standards of behaviour describe the behaviour expected of all members of the school community, staff and pupils, parents/guardians and visitors. These values are put into practice through simple, clear and consistent school rules and routines which are built on:

- respect for yourself
- respect for others
- respect for your school

The school has four core **School Rules**:

**School Rules:**

1. I have respect for myself, other people and for property.
2. I do my best in class and allow others to do the same.
3. I behave in a proper manner at all times.
4. I play safely and fairly.

These rules are brought to the attention of the children through the class teachers on a regular basis. Behaviour that does not conform to one or more of these rules can be considered unacceptable.

The list of rules may vary slightly from time to time, depending on circumstances and as the need arises. For each rule we have certain expectations, and these are explained and taught to all pupils.

The success of the school's code of behaviour depends on consistency in the implementation of these rules. This will be achieved as follows:

- Teaching of the school rules
- Rewards and incentives for keeping the rules
- Prevention strategies
- Sanctions for breaking the rules
- Modelling the standards
- Have ways of ensuring that students with additional needs understand what is expected of them.

**Prevention Strategies**

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. 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 interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

It is important that we keep in mind that the behaviour expected in school may differ significantly from that accepted at home for some children. Recognising this, teachers will teach our pupils strategies that will enable them to meet the school's expectations.

Prevention strategies used in the school may include:

- Restorative Practice
- Circle time

- Organised games and activities at break time
- Carrying out useful tasks
- Helping in the school garden
- Time Out
- Support team
- Use of individual behaviour plans

### **Additional/Specialised Supports**

Children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding and respecting certain rules. Additional inputs and interventions may also be required to help some pupils manage their behaviour and to prevent them failing educationally. Such interventions could include:

- Referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the student
- Involving the SET (Special Education Teachers) team
- Individual Behaviour Support Plans may be devised in consultation with parents, class teacher, SEN teacher and SNA. Professional assessments, where available, may inform and shape the plan.
- Individual Risk Assessments may also be devised where there is a significant health and safety risk posed by the pupil.

A small minority of students may exhibit particularly challenging behaviour. The school, in cooperation with the student's parents, will seek to avail of any local services that may assist in responding to the needs of the student. These services could include the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), NCSE, CAHMS, therapists, relevant professional counselling services, etc.

Teachers will use their professional judgement in the application of the code, understanding that pupils with special educational needs may require additional help to understand and observe the code. Some pupils with significant additional needs may lack the capacity and comprehension skills to understand the details of the code, however, the school's Code of Behaviour applies equally to all pupils enrolled in the school. ***It is important parents/guardians understand that a diagnosis of an additional need does not exclude a pupil from this Code or from serious sanction for serious misbehaviour.***

### **Expected behaviour in the school environment.**

- a) For safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the school building in a quiet, orderly manner. Courteous behaviour is expected at all times.
- b) Pupils must show respect for school property and the property of others.
- c) In the afternoon, pupils should leave the school in an orderly fashion. They must exit the doors at the rear unless they have permission to do otherwise.



- d) All bicycles/scooters must be parked at the front of the school. Pupils are not allowed to cycle or use scooters in the school grounds, including when coming to and leaving school. Pupils are encouraged to wear helmets when cycling.
- e) The school environment extends to when pupils are on school tours, attending school matches or any school-related event.

#### **Expected behaviour before school.**

There is no supervision on the yard in the morning before 9:00 am so, while it is important that all pupils arrive to school on time, it is also important that pupils do not arrive too early. Pupils are allowed into the school building from 9:00 am by the Principal/Deputy Principal or other designated member of staff and are supervised by two teachers until 9:10 am when class starts.

Once on the school grounds, pupils are expected to abide by the school rules and, for health and safety reasons, they:

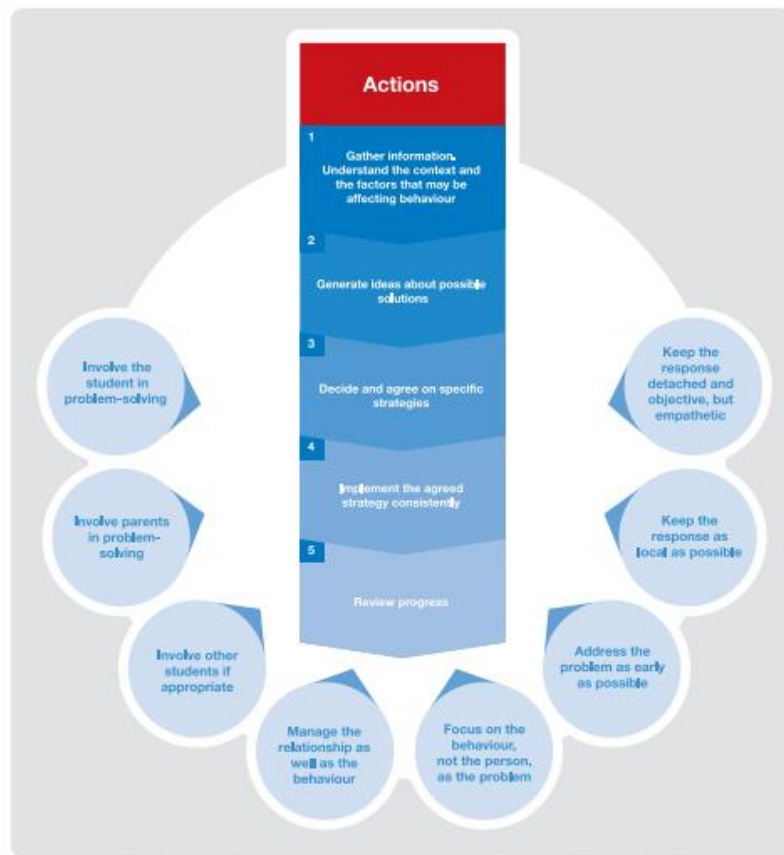
- must remain in the school yard behind the line
- are not allowed to run/walk between the cars
- are not allowed to gather at the gates

#### **Procedures for investigating an alleged incident of misbehaviour**

An important element of addressing a pupil's inappropriate behaviour is a problem-solving approach: that is, one where the teacher and the school respond to the unwanted behaviour using these steps:

1. Gather information to understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour.
2. Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening.
3. Decide and agree on specific strategy.
4. Implement the agreed strategy consistently.
5. Review progress: evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention.
6. Throughout, keep the relationship with the pupil as positive as possible; involve the pupil and parents/guardians.

**Figure 1** below graphically describes the problem-solving approach the school takes to addressing inappropriate behaviour.



### Examples of Misbehaviours and Associated Sanctions

All teachers are responsible for dealing with disciplinary issues. If a teacher deals with an issue concerning a child who is not in their class, the class teacher must be informed. Special Needs Assistants will defer to the class/supervising teacher regarding any disciplinary issues. Below are some examples of behaviours in each category as outlined in the guidance. Please note, this list is merely for exemplar purposes and is not exhaustive. This Code recognises the fact that behaviours are contextually and situationally dependant and as such some of these classifications may change depending on the circumstances.

#### Examples of minor misbehaviours:

- Boisterous play e.g. hitting, pulling, shoving, pushing, tripping.
- Interrupting class work
- Failure to follow instruction
- Being discourteous or unmannerly, name-calling, being cheeky, rude comments, jeering
- Telling 'white' lies
- Stealing items belonging to peers/classroom e.g. rubber, pencil, toys
- Leaving seat without permission
- Not wearing appropriate attire to school.

- Persistent non completion of homework.
- Running in the school building
- Leaving litter around the school
- Failing to line up properly or misbehaving in the line
- Displaying defiant, cheeky or sulky behaviours e.g. shrugging shoulders, walking away when being spoken to, inappropriate tone of voice, etc.
- Leaving the play yard for any reason during break without the permission of the supervising teacher.

### Sanctions for minor misbehaviours

- Verbal reprimand/making pupil aware that their behaviour is unacceptable
- Seating arrangement within class may be changed
- Recompense is expected to be made by pupil/parent/guardian for damage, loss or theft of property
- Principal called in to speak with entire class about expected behaviour in school
- Pupil may be asked to write an account of what happened and how they should have behaved, a copy will be sent to parents/guardians
- Note in homework journal to be signed by parents/guardians

### Examples of serious misbehaviour

- Spitting or coughing at or on another person
- Constant repetition of minor misbehaviour (i.e. no improvement following intervention, three minor misdemeanours in a single school term)
- Stealing of school property e.g. money, classroom resources
- Bullying (see separate Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Ganging up on, picking on, deliberately hurting or interfering with another pupil e.g. writing a note about another pupil, repeatedly kicking a ball at a pupil intentionally
- Shaved patterns in hair, hair dyed or facial piercings.
- Telling serious lies e.g. where the lie may directly/ indirectly affect a person or the outcome of a situation
- Constantly disruptive in class e.g. being cheeky, distracting others, constantly talking
- Defiance/disrespect towards a teacher
- Over-boisterous play e.g. kicking, punching, fighting, dragging
- Using unacceptable or inappropriate language
- Seriously damaging another pupil's property
- Graffiti on school property
- Unauthorised use of mobile phone at school – see below

### Sanctions for serious misbehaviours

- Removal from activity in which pupil is involved
- Inclusion of details of misbehaviour in pupil's school records (behaviour records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in each teacher's classroom)
- Withdrawal of privileges e.g. special treats, including school tours
- Pupil referred to Principal

- Parents/guardians called in to speak with class teacher and/or Principal to resolve the issue and avoid any repetition.
- If a pupil has two or more incidents of serious misbehaviour in a single school term, parents/guardians will be requested to arrange a meeting with class teacher and Principal where a behaviour plan will be discussed and implemented
- If a pupil, having has two or more incidents of serious misbehaviour and having a behaviour plan discussed and implemented, continues to repeat the actions or behaviours, this will be brought to the attention of parents/guardians
- Weekend homework to be overseen by parents/guardians

### Examples of extreme misbehaviours

- Repeated serious misbehaviours (i.e. no improvement following intervention, sanctions, etc.)
- Harassment, discrimination, victimisation, racism
- Bullying (see separate Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Seriously and/or sudden aggressive, threatening and/or violent behaviour
- Serious physical hurt to another person
- Extreme damage to school property
- Leaving school premises during school hours without permission

### Sanctions for extreme misbehaviours

This should be read in conjunction with the section on [Suspensions and Expulsions Procedures](#)

- Safety of all is established e.g. removal of pupils who are in danger
- Contact established with parents/guardians
- Supervision or removal of offending pupil from the school pending a full investigation
- Use of one or more of the sanctions from the list of 'Sanctions for serious misbehaviours'
- Review of behaviour plan
- Suspension
- Expulsion

### Personal Electronic Devices (PED) Policy

PEDs include mobile phones, MP3/MP4 players, iPods, smartwatches or any device capable of making a recording or sending messages.

It is strongly recommended that pupils **do not** bring PEDs to school.

If pupils bring PEDs to school, the following rule applies:

*The PEDs must be powered-off before entering the school grounds and not visible at any time while on the school premises.*

**Sanction:** The PED will be confiscated, placed in an envelope with the pupil's name and class written on it and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office. Following contact with parents/guardians by the Principal, it can only be retrieved by a parent/guardian calling to the school. No exceptions are made.

### Systems for acknowledging good behaviour, progress and effort

Teachers operate individual reward systems within their classrooms. These take many forms and are decided upon by the individual teacher. Reward systems are more likely to motivate pupils where:

- they are meaningful to the individual pupil or group
- the pupil understands what the reward is given for
- they acknowledge behaviour that is valued and desirable
- they are closely linked in time to that specific behaviour
- they are based on a knowledge of the individual and are sensitive to personal, developmental and cultural factors
- they are given for effort and not only for achievement
- they are used consistently and by all staff
- they are used in an inclusive way: rewards must not be used in a way that discriminates against any pupil or group of pupils e.g. pupils from a particular background, gender or ethnic group or pupils whose learning or behaviour may not always be to an acceptable standard

### Where parents/guardians or pupils can get help if problems arise

If parents/guardians encounter a problem they should first raise it with the class teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved by the class teacher then the Principal will become involved.

Pupils should also first raise issues with the class teacher or special education teacher. The Principal will become involved if the issue cannot be resolved at that point.

Castletown Primary School staff work collaboratively to resolve issues and to assist all those who seek help.

### Procedures for detention

A teacher may, at their sole discretion, delay a pupil briefly during break time for minor infringements of this Code.

Prior to a pupil attending detention, parents/guardians will either be called to inform them of a lunchtime detention, or (in the case of serious misbehavior) are issued with a letter explaining the reason/s for detention. This letter must be signed and returned to the school within two school days.

### Reference to school policies to deal with bullying, harassment and sexual harassment

This Code should be read in conjunction with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy – see separate policy on anti-bullying.

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy forms an integral part of this Code.

### When and where pupil behaviour will be subject to this Code

This Code applies to all pupils in attendance on a school day. It extends to all school-related activities both during and outside school hours. It also applies to pupils in receipt of Department of Education & Skills school transport where escorts are employees of the school.

### Policies and procedures regarding suspension and expulsion

Castletown primary School will ensure that fair procedures are followed when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil. Specifically, the right to be heard and the right to impartiality will be observed at all times in dealing with matters that have the potential to result in either the suspension or expulsion of a pupil.

Where there is a prospect of a pupil being suspended or expelled, the school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that there are no undue delays in carrying out an investigation or in making decisions about suspension or expulsion.

Furthermore, great care will be taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence.

## Suspension

Suspension is defined as 'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'. During a period of suspension, the pupil retains their place in the school.

The Board has the authority to suspend a pupil in Castletown Primary School, in the case of suspensions of no more than three days, this authority is formally delegated to the Principal under the terms of this Code.

Where the Principal is of the opinion that a pupil's alleged misbehaviour may warrant a suspension of more than three days, they will refer the matter to the Board for decision.

Where the Principal suspends a pupil for any period of time, they shall provide a report on same to the Board at the Board meeting immediately following the suspension.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Generally, however, other interventions, as outlined above, will have been tried.

## Grounds for suspension

A decision to suspend a pupil will be taken in the following context:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The school management fully appreciates the risks associated with suspension, such as an increased sense of alienation from school which could lead to a cycle of behavioural and academic problems. Thus, school management has been, and will continue to be proactive in avoiding the suspension of any pupil.

## Suspension procedures

1. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant a suspension, the school shall:

- inform the pupil and their parents/guardians about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension, and
- give the parents/guardians and the pupil an opportunity to respond to the complaint.

While this may be done in person or by phone, the details of the communication will be confirmed in writing.

2. Parents/guardians will then be given every reasonable opportunity (five days) to respond before a decision is made and any sanction is imposed. To this end, the Principal will invite the pupil and their parents/guardians to a meeting. This will provide the pupil and their parents/guardians with an opportunity to give their side of the story, to ask questions about the evidence of the pupil's misbehaviour, to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

3. If the pupil and their parents/guardians fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will write to them advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the misbehaviour. The school will record the invitations made to the parents/guardians and their response.
4. Once the pupil and their parents/guardians have responded to the complaint of misbehaviour or, though provided with reasonable opportunity to respond to the complaint, have failed to do so, the Principal (in the case of suspensions imposed by the Principal) or the Board (in the case of suspensions imposed by the Board) decides the case and, where it is deemed appropriate, imposes sanctions involving a suspension.
5. Once the case has been decided and a sanction involving suspension imposed, the school notifies the parents/guardians and the pupil, in writing, of the decision.

This notification will:

- in the case of a suspension imposed by the Principal, advise the parents/guardians of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Board by submitting a written request to the Board seeking an appeal within five days of receiving correspondence from the school advising of the Principal's decision to suspend the pupil
- in the case of a suspension imposed by the Board, advise the parents/guardians of any right they may have to appeal the decision to the Patron
- where the total number of days for which a pupil is being suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, advise the parents/guardians of their right to appeal the suspension to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) and shall include information about how to appeal

Other than in the case of an immediate suspension (see below), a suspension shall not begin until the appeal process, if commenced, is concluded.

The notification will also include the following details:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programmes the pupil should follow during the suspension
- the arrangements for the pupil returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents/guardians. For example, the parents/guardians will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the school's Code of Behaviour

### Immediate suspension

Where the Principal, because of concerns for the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, is of the opinion that an immediate suspension may be warranted, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension.

Where, following this preliminary investigation, the Principal concludes that an immediate suspension is warranted, the parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected. The school will always have regard to its duty of care for the pupil.

A formal investigation of the matter will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.

### The period of suspension

A suspension will usually last one, two or three days. A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a longer suspension is required in order to achieve a particular objective. Suspensions for longer than three days require Board approval.

There will be a ceiling of 10 days on any one suspension.

### Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan.

It is envisaged that suspension be part of an agreed plan to address a pupil's behaviour. Suspension allows:

- the school to set behavioural goals for the pupil
- school staff to plan for appropriate interventions
- the school to impress upon parents/guardians and the pupil the seriousness of the misbehaviour

### Grounds for removing a suspension

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

### Reintegrating the pupil following suspension

Members of staff (Principal, class teacher and special education teacher) will be nominated to support the pupil and to facilitate their re-integration into the school following a suspension.

### Expulsion

A pupil is expelled from the school when the Board makes a decision to permanently exclude them from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Board reserves to itself the authority to expel a pupil.

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to a pupil's behaviour and will only be taken in response to extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of the pupil.

These steps will normally include:

- meeting the parents/guardians and the pupil to try to find ways to help the pupil to change their behaviour
- making sure that the pupil understands the consequences of their behaviour if it persists
- ensuring that all other available options have been tried
- enlisting the assistance of support agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE), HSE community services

### Grounds for expulsion

A proposal to expel a pupil will involve serious grounds such as that:

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

### Expulsion for a first offence

In extraordinary circumstances, the Board may form the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. The following such behaviour may warrant this sanction:

- serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff



- actual serious violence or physical assault
- supply of illegal drugs to another pupil or pupils
- sexual assault

### Procedures in respect of expulsion

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 by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

#### **Step 1. Detailed investigation under the direction of the Principal**

In investigating an incident, the Principal shall:

- inform the parents/guardians, in writing, about the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give the parents/guardians and the pupil every reasonable opportunity (five days) to respond to the complaint of misbehaviour before a decision is made and a sanction is imposed
- arrange a meeting with the pupil and their parents/guardians so they may present their side of the story, ask questions about the evidence of misbehaviour, and make a case for a lessening of the sanctions. The meeting may also be an opportunity for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the pupil's behaviour
- where a pupil or their parents/guardians refuse to attend a meeting with the Principal, write to them advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation to parents/guardians and their response

#### **Step 2. Recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the detailed investigation of the alleged misbehaviour (see immediately above), that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board to consider expulsion. Furthermore, the Principal shall:

- inform the parents/guardians that the Board has been asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that the parents/guardians have records of the allegations against the pupil, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents/guardians
- notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board
- ensure that the 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**

Once the Board receives a recommendation from the Principal to the effect that the misbehaviour of a pupil merits the consideration of expulsion, the Board will:

- review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures
- undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case
- ensure that no person who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case may be involved in the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the pupil)

Where the Board is satisfied that the initial investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures, it will conduct a hearing in accordance with the following:

- The Principal and parents/guardians shall put forward their cases in each other's presence.
- Each party shall be allowed to question the evidence of the other party.
- The Board shall be, and shall be seen to be, impartial.
- If the parents/guardians wish to be accompanied to the hearing the Board shall facilitate this.
- Having heard both parties, the Board will decide whether or not the allegation of the Principal is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- Neither the Principal nor the parents/guardians may be present for the Board's deliberations.

### **Step 4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing**

Having heard from all parties, the Board will decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Once the Board has decided the case, it will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents/guardians will be advised that the Board will now inform the EWO.

Where the Board concludes that the pupil should be expelled, it will notify the EWO in writing, giving reasons for its opinion. The pupil shall not be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this notification.

### **Step 5. Consultation arranged by the Education Welfare Officer**

Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from the Board of its opinion that a pupil should be expelled, the EWO must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents/guardians and the pupil, and anyone else who may be of assistance, and
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend to ensure that arrangements are made for the pupil to continue in education. Pending these consultations, the Board may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained, and that the safety of pupils is secured. The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the pupil during this time. Suspension shall be considered where there is likelihood that the continued presence of the pupil in the school during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

### **Step 6. Confirmation of the decision to expel**

Where the 20-day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and where the Board remains of the view that the pupil should be expelled, the Board shall formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parents/guardians shall be notified immediately of this decision by either the Chairperson of the Board or the Principal. Parents/guardians shall also be informed of the right to an appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills and be provided with a standard form on which to lodge this appeal.

The school will keep a formal record of the decision to expel the pupil.

### Appeals

The Board recognises that parents/guardians may appeal a decision to expel a pupil to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, Section 29). An appeal may also be brought on behalf of the pupil by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) or its successor.

### Procedures for notifying the school about reasons for absence from school

A note from parents/guardians is required (these can be sent via handwritten letter or email):

- when a pupil has been absent from school due to illness or for any other reason (a phone call will not suffice for official reporting to the State authorities)
- if a parent/guardian wishes their child to leave school early (the pupil must be collected by and signed out by an adult)
- in the event of a pupil being late for school

Sometimes pupils become ill during the school day. In such cases, it is the policy of the school to contact parents/guardians so that the necessary arrangements for collecting the pupil may be made. Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that the school has a contact number for them at all times to cover this situation.

An adult must collect the pupil and sign them out of the school using the sign-out book located beside the front door. No exceptions will be made to this requirement.

Parents/guardians are notified of the accumulation of unexplained absences via phone calls and email/texts. The following arrangements are in place:

- 10 days absent: phone call/email to parents/guardians
- 15 days absent: text/email sent to parents/guardians
- 18 days absent: text/email sent to parents/guardians asking them to contact the Principal to arrange a meeting. Attendance conference involving class teacher, Principal and parents/guardians may be convened
- 20 days absent: text sent to parents/guardians requesting meeting with Principal and letter sent to home address. Túsla notified at this point.
- In excess of 20 days: Education Welfare Officer may be notified.

### Procedures for raising a concern or bringing a complaint about a behaviour matter

To raise a concern relating to a behaviour matter, parents/guardians should, in the first instance, raise the concern with the class teacher. If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved at this point, then the Principal should be contacted.

### Raising a complaint against a staff member

The procedure set out here does not apply to complaints in relation to actions or decisions by the school surrounding issues of child protection, suspensions, expulsions, refusals to enrol and those decisions which may discriminate against a pupil.

The following procedure sets out the stages to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage.

### **Stage 1**

A parent/guardian (hereinafter referred to as the complainant) who wishes to make a complaint should approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

Where the complainant is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, they should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it.

### **Stage 2**

If the complaint is still unresolved and the complainant wishes to pursue the matter further, they should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board.

The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the class teacher concerned and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 3**

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board, and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board not to be required:

- (a) Supply the class teacher concerned with a copy of the written complaint; and
- (b) Arrange a meeting with the class teacher and, where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 4**

If the complaint is still not resolved, the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in **Stage 3(b)** above.

If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the class teacher and the complainant should so be informed within three days of the Board meeting.

If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

- a) The class teacher and the complainant should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage.
- b) The class teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint.
- c) The class teacher should be requested to provide a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint.
- d) The class teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The class teacher is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.

- f) The meetings of the Board referred to in **d)** and **e)** will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in **Stage 3(b)**.

**Stage 5**

When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the class teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting with the Board.

**The decision of the Board shall be final.**

**The plan for reviewing the Code**

This Code will be reviewed 12 months following the date of its adoption by the Board. Thereafter the Code will be reviewed biennially (every 2 years).

A review of the Code involves the formation of a sub committee consisting of three members of the Board to gather the views of pupils, parents/guardians and staff. This may be done through the use of questionnaires, focus groups or general meetings.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)