



# *Cód Iompair*

## *Code of Behaviour*

## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR – Good Behaviour for Happy Learning

### Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour is the culmination of a process of review involving the children, parents and staff of Gaelscoil na Cille. It was formulated during the 2009-10 school-year and reviewed in February 2019.

### Rationale

*Bord Bainistíochta Gaelscoil na Cille* has conducted this review at this particular time because it recognises the great benefit of having a clear, positive and unifying code of behaviour that both guides and elicits high standards of behaviour in all the school community.

Conscious that an orderly but happy climate is conducive to learning, An *Bord* wishes to ensure that our policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

A Code of Behaviour is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), 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 shall 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 concerned;*
- D. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
- E. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*

### Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The school community of Gaelscoil na Cille is committed to providing a safe, happy and nurturing context where our children are enabled to develop emotionally, physically, spiritually and cognitively. In scaffolding the learning of our pupils, staff and parents also learn with them.

Since our school is a *Gaelscoil*, teaching, learning and communication happen through the medium of *Gaeilge*, and this particular characteristic of our school-life is fundamental to the ethos and identity of this school.

Our Code of Behaviour outlines the various considerations, principles and structures that underpin these central values in Gaelscoil na Cille.

#### Process of Review

- *Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bhainistíochta* and *Príomhoide* engaged in discussions pertaining to (a) the structure and timing of the process of review, (b) consultation of staff, children, parents and Board members about existing policy (c) drafting of a working document upon which the policy could be built
- A steering committee was appointed consisting of *Cathaoirleach an Bhoird, An Príomhoide*, the Special Duties Post-Holder, Member of *Coiste na dTuismitheoirí*.
- The steering committee authorized *Príomhoide na scoile* to organise the process of review
- *Foireann na Scoile* engaged in a review of current practice and identified areas for development which were then referred to steering committee.
- Parents were invited to submit suggestions, observations and ideas with regard to our current practice and how that might be improved
- *Coiste na dTuismitheoirí* were invited to inform the steering committee of observations and suggestions. A survey/review instrument was provided to help in this process.
- *Páistí na scoile* were consulted through a comprehensive survey of pupils from Rang 3-6, administered by the senior pupils. Discussion on findings was conducted at class-level and distilled suggestions from pupil body relayed to steering committee.
- The Steering Committee composed a draft of the revised policy/code based on feedback received .
- This document was reviewed by *Bord, Coiste* and *Foireann na scoile* and suggestions were considered by the steering committee in formulation of the final Code of Behaviour.

#### Aims

By introducing this policy the school is working:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- 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.

Content of policy
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The policy is addressed under the following headings:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
  - a. Expectations of Staff
  - b. Expectations of Pupils
  - c. Expectations of Parents
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour
  - a. Teamwork Approach
  - b. Bord Bainistíochta
  - c. Staff
  - d. Parents
  - e. Pupils
  - f. Responsibilities of School Community
  - g. Other Policies and Practices
  - h. SPHE Curriculum
  - i. School Planning and Post of Responsibility
  - j. Communication
    - to staff
    - to parents
    - to Pupils
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
  - a. Whole-school level
  - b. Classroom level
  - c. Playground level
  - d. Other contexts
4. Rewards and sanctions
  - a. Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
  - b. Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
  - c. Guiding principles for staff in responding to inappropriate behaviour
  - d. Graded sanctions
  - e. Very serious misbehaviour
  - f. Students with special educational needs
  - g. Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
  - h. Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
5. Suspension / Expulsion
  - a. Suspension
  - b. Expulsion
  - c. Appeals
6. Keeping records
  - a. Class
  - b. Playground
  - c. School records

7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school
8. Reference to other policies
9. Success Criteria
10. Roles and Responsibilities
11. Implementation Date
12. Timetable for Review
13. Ratification and Communication

## 1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the Code of Behaviour shall specify “*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*”.

Accordingly, the following sets out the standards of behaviour expected of staff, children and parents, in line with the characteristic spirit of our school.

### **Every member of staff is expected:**

- to show respect to everyone, including themselves
- to be courteous, consistent and fair
- to prepare their work and create engaging learning situations
- to be on time for work
- to recognise good work and behaviour
- to deal with bad behaviour
- to listen at appropriate times to pupils’ explanations for their behaviour
- to implement the Code of Behaviour consistently, on a whole-school basis

### **Every pupil is expected:**

- to show respect to everyone, including themselves
- to be considerate to other children and to adults
- to respect the characteristic linguistic ethos of the school
- to show respect for the property of the school, other children’s and their own belongings
- to do his/her best to learn and to allow others do likewise
- to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual

### **Every parent is expected:**

- to show respect to others
- to be courteous and fair
- to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- to encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- to help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- to ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school
- to engage with the school in a common effort to support their child’s learning and behaviour
- to attend meetings at the school if requested
- to support the Code of Behaviour
- to deal with bad behaviour
- to support the requirement that the characteristic linguistic ethos of the school be respected by the pupils

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, *an Príomhoide* shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour and that *an Príomhoide* ‘*may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child*’.

Since our Code of Behaviour is predicated on the co-operation and mutual respect of the school community all parents are required to support the Code of Behaviour.

## **2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**

### **Teamwork Approach**

*Bord Bainistíochta Ghaelscoil na Cille* recognises that a whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour is key. A happy school climate, conducive to good teaching and learning, is itself the product of a number of factors. Foremost among these is a Teamwork approach to behaviour.

### **Bord Bainistíochta**

*Bord Bainistíochta na Scoile* has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school has a Code of Behaviour. It also takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that it is implemented properly. The Board supports the Code by providing opportunities for staff development in the area of positive behaviour. It also recognises its important role in dealing with instances of serious breaches of the Code.

### **Staff**

Teachers recognise that a foundation of positive learning behaviour is effective teaching, and an inclusive and engaging curriculum. The learning programme in the school and how it is presented to the students can have a significant effect on student behaviour. Good classroom management and teaching methods help create conditions where poor behaviour is less likely to occur.

The success of a positive code of behaviour depends upon its consistent implementation by all staff. Staff recognise that each member must implement the Code not only in their own classrooms but also wherever and whenever they encounter situations where the Code requires implementation, especially in the school-yard and other public areas.

The Code has the authority of being the product of the deliberations of the entire school community, therefore, individual staff must neither dilute nor alter it. This does not preclude staff from bringing observations and recommendations forward for a review of the Code.

### **Parents**

Gaelscoil na Cille has always enjoyed excellent interaction between parents and staff. *Bord Bainistíochta Ghaelscoil na Cille* recognises that good communication and relations between home and school greatly enhances both the learning and behaviour of our children.

*An Bord* drew upon the ideas of parents in formulating this policy through inviting suggestions and submissions from the parental body and through consultation with *Coiste na dTuismitheoirí*.

Parents have an indispensable role in cultivating the values of respect for self and others which form the foundation of this Code of Behaviour. They recognise that parental support for the Code of Behaviour is an important element in ensuring all children can learn in a happy and safe context. Parents also recognise the value of close collaboration with the school in a joint effort to promote good behaviour. Being prepared to attend meetings at the school, informal or formal, is implicit in this support.

### **Pupils**

Pupils were integrally involved in the formulation of the existing code of behaviour and they have been actively involved also in the review of that code. Recognising that pupils need to have 'ownership' of the Code, they have been consulted widely and engaged in discussion and debate about its elements. It is recognised that they should also be consulted with regard to the ongoing monitoring of the implementation and evaluation of the Code which forms the basis of future reviews.

### **Responsibilities of School Community**

*Bord Bainistíochta na scoile, An Príomhoide*, teachers, other school staff, parents and students each have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school. These responsibilities are articulated in Section 1, however the whole-school approach requires the school to provide opportunities and support for these groups to understand and live up to these responsibilities. This means, for example, that parents have opportunities to learn how their commitment to, and their relationship with, the school can impact on behaviour and learning. Students learn how their behaviour and learning, the learning of other students, and the wellbeing of staff, are linked together.

### **Other Policies and Practices**

The Code of Behaviour outlines how we expect all to treat each other, in class and without. The permeating character of the Code of Behaviour requires that all of the policies and practices in the school be in harmony with this code. All policies and practices that dovetail with the Code of Behaviour will therefore be reviewed and where necessary, be brought into harmony with it.

### **SPHE Curriculum**

The school's SPHE curriculum has a key role in supporting 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. Programmes to foster safety skills, social and conflict resolution skills will be taught within the wider SPHE curriculum. Circle Time and Role Play are among the strategies used in these sessions.

### **School Planning and Post of Responsibility**

The school development planning process will help the school to ensure that all of our policies and procedures contribute to a positive environment for learning and teaching.



In order to ensure a whole school approach to behaviour, responsibility for the promotion of positive behaviour is one of the tasks assigned to the *Príomhoide Tánaisteach* (Deputy Principal). This post-holder will coordinate the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Code and be the link person for staff for queries and support. They will also be responsible for triggering regular reviews of the Code and for coordinating that process.

## **Communication**

### *Communication of the Code to Staff*

As each member of staff is critically important to ensure a positive, fair and consistent system, all members of staff need to be very familiar with the Code. To this end, each will be given a hard copy and digital copy of the Code of Behaviour.

The workings of the Code of Behaviour will be an item on the agenda at regular staff-meetings and there will be an annual presentation at the first staff meeting of the year to refresh understanding and to communicate the Code to new staff. The Special Duties Post-Holder with responsibility for the Code will provide ongoing support to all new staff. An overview of the Code will be given to substitute teachers by *an Príomhoide*. Staff members are encouraged to communicate observations that will enhance the Code to the Special Duties Post-Holder.

### *Communication to Parents*

New parents will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour or given in writing, a link to it on the school website. A summary of the central tenets of the Code will be sent home at the beginning of each school-year as well as a link to the actual Code on the school website. Parents will be encouraged to make themselves familiar with the Code, especially with how they, as parents, can support it.

### *Communication with Pupils*

It is critically important that the pupils are given ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Code. Their willing cooperation and support of the Code is what will ensure it can achieve its goal – a positive, happy school where learning is facilitated. Accordingly, teachers will create contexts where pupils can explore the link between good behaviour, learning-conducive classrooms and a happy, safe school. The Code needs to be taught to the children at the beginning of every school-year, with revision of key elements on a termly basis. Appendix x outlines the content for these termly revisions.

This communication with our children is a fundamental part of the Code.

### 3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

*'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'.* (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

#### *Whole-school level*

- Every opportunity will be utilized to stress that the happiness of each child is the number one priority in this school. Strategies such as the school newsletter, assemblies, prize-giving such as Gaeilgeoir na Míosa and visits by *an Príomhoide* to classrooms will all emphasize the connection between the positive behaviour of each individual and the happy learning of others.
- An annual focus (*Coicís an Chairdis*) on the values that underpin the Code of Behaviour will be held. This fortnight will also be a major strategy of our Anti-Bullying Policy.

#### *Classroom Level*

- Recognising that an engaging, well-organized class helps mitigate misbehaviour, teachers are committed to ensuring that there is a happy and positive climate in each classroom. Underpinning this positive atmosphere is a commitment to the welfare of each child and an acknowledgement of their dignity. Good work and good behaviour are acknowledged and praised continually. Credit is also given for effort.
- A clear set of rules that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning are set out here. These will be known by all pupils and staff. These rules, few in number and easily understood, are revised regularly and positively reinforced.

#### In class:

1. I will always use Gaeilge while in school.
2. I will be kind, fair and polite
3. I will follow instructions promptly
4. I will come to school on time with my books and equipment, wearing my uniform
5. I will do my best always
6. I will pay attention in class.
7. I will raise my hand and wait quietly until I have permission to speak.
8. I will take good care of the classroom

#### Outside Class:

1. I will play safely and fairly
  2. I will walk to and from the yard, and in the corridors
  3. When the bell rings I will walk immediately to the line
- A guiding principle for the class teacher is that of consciously praising twice as much as noting any breaches of the rules. The good teacher is kind but firm, consistent but clear. The happy classroom is a place where lessons are interesting, allowing children

regular opportunities for active learning and where each child can experience success. While the learning task will sometimes be challenging, there should also be place for humour in the classroom.

- Teachers have a right to expect to be treated with respect at all times. As adults and professionals, they also recognise that a fair hearing is important for building relationships of trust and respect upon which our code is built and that there are occasions where children need to be given an opportunity to explain their behaviour.
- Teachers will regularly refer to the central values of the Code of Behaviour and re-teach the rules at the beginning of every term.

### *Playground Level*

- In promoting positive behaviour in the playground, teachers will address the issues of safety and conflict-resolution with children in specific lessons as well as through regular informal reminders. The primacy of the requirement that children communicate *as Gaeilge* will also be continually reinforced.
- The staff will make clear to pupils what activities are permitted. The Special Duties Post-holder with responsibility for Supervision will coordinate the communication with staff and pupils about these activities.
- Cultivating an awareness that each child has a responsibility to help staff counter unacceptable behaviour and bullying is an important element of the SPHE curriculum and component programmes such as *Stay Safe*. This is especially important with regard to the playground.
- The school policy for supervision outlines the procedures for dealing with and recording instances of both exemplary behaviour and misbehaviour in the playground. *Leabhar an Chlóis* will be brought by supervising teachers to *Rúnaí na Scoile* after the break. *An Rúnaí* will ensure that information recorded is communicated to the relevant class teachers. Significant issues will be brought to the attention of an *Príomhoide Tánaisteach* or an *Príomhoide*.
- On wet days where pupils are not able to play outside clear procedures apply that ensure the safety of all. Pupils are required to remain seated while playing a board-game or other game, or reading a book. Any breaches of the rule to remain seated will be considered as a significant breach, because of the inherent threat to pupil safety.

### *Other contexts*

The standards and rules contained in this Code of Behaviour will apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. Examples of such contexts where are the following:

- Extra-curricular activities
- School tours
- Games and matches

- Concerts (including *Ceolchoirm na Nollag*)
- Other school-linked events

### *Infant Classes*

The principles enshrined in the classroom rules will be communicated informally at first to the incoming Junior Infants. Through encouragement and affirmation they will be helped by the class teacher to adopt behaviours that are conducive to learning from the beginning. At an appropriate stage the infants will begin to follow the system whereby they will be awarded stamps for their good behaviour in a *leabhar stampaí*. Both infant levels will be awarded three stamps daily, one for each session.

## 4. Rewards and Sanctions

### Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- The school community is committed to promoting good behaviour in every way possible. Acts of kindness, courtesy, consideration, selflessness and helpfulness will be acknowledged and where appropriate highlighted publically at school assembly or at classroom level. .
- Teachers will use their own individual incentives to promote good behaviour in class that are class and age appropriate e.g. Leabhar Stampaí, Class dojo etc.)
- Pupils' efforts and achievements in a wide range of areas will be acknowledged by sending home frequent *Cártaí molta*. All children who are respecting the Code should receive regular affirmation and praise for their good behaviour in this way.
- Teachers are encouraged to invite *an Príomhoide* to visit their class periodically to affirm excellent behaviour and work.

### Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

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

A graded system of sanctions will be used to respond to instances of inappropriate behaviour. In devising these sanctions, every effort has been made to come up with responses that are non-punitive, but that are focused on helping the child to assess their own behaviour against the standards set out in this Code, with a view to choosing to respect those standards.

### Guiding principles for staff in responding to inappropriate behaviour

- Physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment is illegal
- Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a student's self confidence must never be used
- While addressing misbehaviour staff must:
  - remain calm and dispassionate,
  - not give a protracted lecture
  - criticise the behaviour not the child
- Sanctions must not be applied to whole groups or classes, in cases of individual or small-group wrongdoing
- Pupils must not be left in an unsupervised situation

### Graded Sanctions

When a child breaks one of the rules they move onto the first step on the list of graded sanctions. If a further breach happens, they move up a further step. At each stage the child

is informed clearly by the teacher what rule has been broken and what stage they have reached. These sanctions are:

- Céim 1: A verbal correction by teacher, explaining what rule has been broken and informing the child s/he is on *Céim 1*.
- Céim 2: Name written on board by teacher as a visible reminder to child [will be removed at end of school-day].
- Céim 3: Teacher has a private word with the child (at teacher's table) just before class goes out to play at break or before going home.
- Céim 4: Child is moved to another position in class **or to another classroom**.
- Céim 5: Teacher puts a note in child's journal to inform parents that child has reached Céim 5. An explanatory note will also be given outlining the rationale and importance of the rules in question.
- Céim 6: Pupil referred to an *Príomhoide Tánaisteach* and a standard formal letter sent by her to parents.\*
- Céim 7: Pupil referred to an *Príomhoide*. Parents are requested to attend school to discuss the matter.\*
- Céim 8: Matter referred to *An Bord Bainistíochta* who may opt to suspend the pupil. \*\*
- Céim 9. Matter referred to *An Bord Bainistíochta* who may opt to expel the pupil.

*\*When a pupil reaches Céim 6 or Céim 7 or there is a pattern of other sanctions having little or no effect on negative behaviour, it may be appropriate and/or necessary to withdraw privileges such as treats, trips (including school matches) special games and activities.*

*\*\* In exceptional circumstances an immediate suspension may be imposed by an *Príomhoide**

- Every child begins each new day with a clean slate.
- However, where a pupil consistently breaks a particular rule, despite this being addressed by the teacher, it will be open to the teacher to start that pupil on a higher step, with a view to helping the child rectify this element of their behaviour. It may be necessary to move the child up in this way on more than one occasion. If this is being done, the class teacher will explain why to the pupil.

### **Serious Misbehaviour**

Instances of serious misbehaviour will place a pupil on *Céim 6* automatically. The following are examples (not exhaustive) of such misbehaviour:

- Systematic bullying behaviour
- Seriously disrespectful behaviour to a teacher or other member of staff
- Consistent failure to speak Gaeilge

- Deliberate continued defiance
- Bringing any item to school that might endanger a child or adults
- Use of prohibited substances
- Use of abusive language
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Making racist, sexist or sexualised remarks
- Leaving school grounds without permission

It should be noted that the seriousness of the misbehaviour may also lead to higher sanctions, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Repeated instances of very serious misbehaviour may lead to suspension and/or expulsion.

### **Students with Special Needs**

Staff will implement this Code of Behaviour with common-sense and sensitivity. This does not mean that it is open to staff to dilute or alter the Code. However, the school recognises that a child's circumstances may call for particular sensitivity and common-sense in implementation, while not compromising the rights of others.

School and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs. Sanctions may be needed to help such a pupil to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills. However, teachers should ensure that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

### **Involving parents in management of problem behaviour**

- *An Príomhoide* and Staff are committed to helping every child to manage their behaviour successfully. Where it is necessary to inform and involve parents as part of that process, staff and parents need to collaborate to support the child's behaviour. It is important that home and school approach the issue with an open mind and a commitment to maintain a cordial and trusting relationship. For its part, the school is committed to putting parents at ease and addressing issues in a calm, non-judgemental way. In some instances, a specific behaviour management programme may be devised for the child which can give parents the opportunity of monitoring and supporting their child's behavioural progress.
- Where appropriate, meetings may be arranged between parents and class teacher to address behaviour or monitor progress. These meetings should be arranged for a time when the teacher is not teaching.
- Meetings held to address serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour (*Céim 6* upwards) may be held in *Oifig an Phríomhoide* or elsewhere. Where appropriate and feasible, the class-teacher will attend. With parental consent the pupil concerned may attend part, or all of this meeting. In such a case, both parents and school must ensure that the meeting is characterised by a spirit of collaboration between home and school so that it is a positive experience, capable of supporting the child to an improvement in their behaviour.

- Parents are welcome to communicate concerns to the school. While the school's Complaints Procedure envisages communication with the class teacher initially, parents are also free to make contact with *an Príomhoide* in certain instances.

### **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

The following strategies will be used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems:

- Children who may be emotionally disturbed will be referred for psychological assessment.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support will be sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, National Educational Psychological Service
- In the event that certain pupils might have a tendency to violent or aggressive behaviour all staff will be kept informed of this.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, *Bord Bainistíochta na scoile* may authorise staff to use physical restraint.
- *An Bord* will ensure that proper training by competent persons is provided for this eventuality.



## 5. Suspension / Expulsion

*Bord Bainistíochta Ghaelscoil na Cille* is confident that most behavioural issues can be dealt with without recourse to punitive measures. It recognises also however, that there may be circumstances where the welfare of children or staff and indeed the school's ethos may be under serious threat. In such instances, in accordance with Education Welfare Act, 2000 (*Section 24(5)*) *an Bord Bainistíochta* has the authority to suspend or expel a pupil.

### a. Suspension

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as (but not limited to):

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to the well-being or safety of pupils or staff
- The pupil's ongoing behaviour fundamentally undermines the ethos of the school
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension

While suspension is normally only warranted by serious misbehaviour, any behaviour that is persistently injurious to the ethos of the school, disruptive to learning, or potentially dangerous can be a serious matter.

#### *Fair Procedures*

- *An Bord* is committed to ensuring that the procedures that might lead to a suspension or expulsion are fair and reasonable. No decision to suspend or expel will be taken without a comprehensive and fair investigation of the circumstances of the matter involved. In the interests of impartiality, *an Príomhoide* may arrange for another staff-member to conduct this investigation so that he is free to consider the report and take a view about whether the pupil did engage in the behaviour and about the appropriateness of sanction. Guidelines and templates for conducting such investigations are provided by *an Bord* and should be followed.
- A staff-member alleging the misbehaviour, or who is a victim or witness should not conduct the investigation.
- At the earliest opportunity, the pupil and his/her parents will be informed about the allegation and that the seriousness of the matter could result in suspension. They will also be informed of the processes that will be used to investigate the matter. This communication may be made by telephone but will also be made in writing.
- Pupil and parents will also be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation before a decision is made or serious sanction imposed. This can be facilitated at a meeting with parents (and pupil).

### *Period of suspension*

- A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where *an Príomhoide* considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed..
- If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by *an Príomhoide*, the matter will be referred to *an Bord Bainistíochta* for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. However, in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, *an Bord Bainistíochta* authorises an *Príomhoide*, with the approval of *Cathaoirleach an Bhoird*, to impose a suspension of up to five days.
- In circumstances where the total number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in a school-year reaches twenty days parents will be notified of their right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

### *Immediate Suspension*

- Where an immediate suspension is considered by *an Príomhoide* to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. *An Bord Bainistíochta* have delegated the authority to suspend pupils to *an Príomhoide*.

### *Implementation of Suspension*

*An Príomhoide* will notify the parents and the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will set out clearly:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and parents (for example, parents may be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to *an Bord Bainistíochta*
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

### *Re-integrating the pupil*

- The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed during a suspension. When the suspended pupil resumes school *an Príomhoide* will consult with the class teacher to find out what has been covered/learned while the pupil was absent. *An Príomhoide* and Class Teacher will agree strategies to help the pupil catch up. Parents will be informed of these strategies and may be required to help with this through supporting their child with their homework. Particular care will be afforded the pupil also to support him/her for a period after their return to school.
- While the school retains a record of behaviour and of sanctions imposed, once a suspension is served, the pupil starts again with a 'clean slate'. The school expects the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

## Expulsion

The decision to expel is a very serious step and one that will only be taken by *an Bord Bainistíochta* in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken prior significant steps to address misbehaviour before considering expelling any pupil. These may include (but not be limited to):

- meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
- making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

The decision to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as (but not limited to):

- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of the significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to the well-being or safety of pupils or staff
- The pupil's ongoing behaviour fundamentally undermines the ethos of the school
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

### *Determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil*

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction, *an Bord Bainistíochta* will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student. Among the factors to be considered are the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the context and impact of the behaviour, interventions tried to date as well as possible impact of the expulsion.

### *Fair Procedures*

- *An Bord* is committed to ensuring that the procedures that might lead to a suspension or expulsion are fair and reasonable. No decision to suspend or expel will be taken without a comprehensive and fair investigation of the circumstances of the matter involved.
- Where a preliminary assessment of facts confirms serious misbehaviour that might warrant expulsion the procedural steps will include:
  1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of *an Príomhoide*.
  2. A recommendation to *an Bord Bainistíochta* by *an Príomhoide*.
  3. Consideration by *an Bord Bainistíochta* of *an Príomhoide's* recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
  4. *Bord Bainistíochta* deliberations and actions following the hearing.
  5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
  6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- *An Bord Bainistíochta* is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

- *An Bord Bainistíochta* will decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.
- At the earliest opportunity, the pupil and his/her parents will be informed about the allegation and that the seriousness of the matter could result in suspension. They will also be informed of the processes that will be used to investigate the matter. This communication may be made by telephone but will also be made in writing.
- Pupil and parents will also be given every opportunity to respond to the allegation before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation and before a sanction is imposed. Parents and pupil will be invited to a meeting to ensure pupil and parents can give their side of the story and to ask questions about the incident. Every effort will be made by the school to facilitate this meeting. If parents fail to attend this meeting *an Príomhoide* will write to them, advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

#### *Recommendation to an Bord Bainistíochta by an Príomhoide*

- Where *an Príomhoide* forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, he will make a recommendation to *an Bord Bainistíochta* to consider expulsion. *An Príomhoide* will:
  - inform the parents and the student that *an Bord Bainistíochta* is being asked to consider expulsion
  - ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which an *Bord Bainistíochta* is being asked to consider expulsion
  - provide *an Bord Bainistíochta* with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
  - notify the parents of the date of the hearing by *an Bord Bainistíochta* and invite them to that hearing
  - advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to an *Bord Bainistíochta*
  - ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

#### *Consideration by an Bord Bainistíochta of the recommendation*

- It is the responsibility of *an Bord Bainistíochta* to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).
- Where *an Bord Bainistíochta* decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, *an Príomhoide* and the parents, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to

question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between *an Príomhoide* and the student.

- Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that *an Príomhoide* and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

#### *Bord Bainistíochta deliberations and actions following the hearing*

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction. This decision will be made by the members of the *Bord* (minus *an Príomhoide* who will be absent for these deliberations). In the event of a vote where the number of votes in favour and against expulsion are equal, the Cathaoirleach will have the casting vote as per the *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure* (13c).
- Where *an Bord Bainistíochta*, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).
- The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).
- The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

#### *Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer*

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a *Bord Bainistíochta* of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must (i) make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with *an Príomhoide*, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance and (ii) convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, section 24).

#### *Confirmation of the decision to expel*

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where *an Bord Bainistíochta* remains of the view that the student should be expelled, *an Bord Bainistíochta* will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task may be delegated to *An Cathaoirleach* and *an Príomhoide*). Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.

## **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 some decisions of

*an Bord Bainistíochta*, 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 parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

- Parents/guardians will be informed in writing by Cathaoirleach an Bhoird of their entitlement to appeal a decision of *an Bord Bainistíochta* in relation to suspension or expulsion. Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms.
- An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.
- The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science).
- *An Bord Bainistíochta* will nominate some board members to prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science.

#### *Review of use of expulsion*

*An Bord Bainistíochta* will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

## Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, the following sets out the arrangements for recording pupils' behaviour:

### Class level

- o Class teachers record pupils' instances of misbehaviour on a weekly grid. Where a pattern of misbehaviour is causing concern this may be noted in the teacher's notebook and this brought to the attention of *an Príomhoide Tánaisteach* or *Príomhoide*. Records of behaviour should be written in a factual and impartial manner.
- o The class teacher should also record details of positive behaviour and the affirmations (certificates, notes home, *cártaí molta* etc. sent home. This record is very important as a means of ensuring that the everyday good behaviour of children is not taken for granted and go unnoticed.
- o The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour. Staff are clear as to what constitutes excellent – poor behaviour through discussion of this issue annually at a staff meeting. In the case of a report stating poor behaviour, this will only reflect what has already been communicated in person.

### Playground

- o Supervising staff make a note of misbehaviour in the playground using a system of agreed abbreviations. This record is then communicated to relevant class teachers who adjust their class grid. Staff meetings will address regularly the importance of consistency in the application and interpretation of the rules.

### School records

- o Each teacher will keep individual records. The weekly class grids will be retained to the end of the school year, as these show the pattern of behaviour of a child at a glance. At the beginning of the next school-year these will be shredded. In exceptional cases, the school may retain these records in the case of a pupil whose behaviour is a source of significant concern.
- o Records, such as factual reports of particular incidents, communication between school and home, with outside agencies, with an *Bord Bainistíochta* and any documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29 will be retained at school level. These records will be managed by *an Príomhoide* and access to them is restricted.

## 7. 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 parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

- The school considers good attendance and punctuality to be vitally important for a pupil's educational development. Accordingly these are enshrined in our school rules. A variety of strategies are used to encourage school attendance e.g.
  - o Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
  - o System for acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance

- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- The school regularly reminds parents of their obligations to explain pupil absences. Parents/guardians send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes are signed and dated and are retained until the end of the school year. Data from these notes is input into the school administration system which tracks, records and reports on pupil's absences to the National Education Welfare Board.

## 8. Reference to other Policies

The following school policies have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour and reflect the core principles of respect, fairness and responsibility which permeate this Code.

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Complaints Procedure
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Home / School links
- Health & Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs

## 9. Success Criteria

In order to help us evaluate the effectiveness of this Code we will look for the following indicators of the success of the policy:

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



## 10. Roles and Responsibility

- *Bord Bainistíochta*

It is the role of the *Bord* to ensure that the Code is implemented in full. It is also the responsibility of an *Bord* to act where appropriate to ensure the effectiveness of the Code, especially with regard to suspension and/or expulsion.

- While it is a core principle of this Code that all partners in the school community have responsibilities in upholding the Code, particular responsibility belongs to the school staff to implement the Code with consistency and fairness.
- Múinteoir Deirdre Nic Uaid will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy in conjunction with *an Príomhoide*.
- All members of staff have a vital role in monitoring the implementation and evaluating the success of the Code. This role is especially evident when staff meet to evaluate the success of the Code or to review it.
- The Code exists to create happy learning conditions for our pupils and their feedback is important to the ongoing evaluation of the Code. Pupils will be surveyed at appropriate intervals as part of this feedback.
- As well as having an indispensable role in supporting the Code, parents have also a role in providing feedback on the effectiveness of the Code. The school will welcome such feedback.

## 11. Implementation Date

This revised Code of Behaviour will come into effect in February 2019

## 12. Timetable for Review

This revised Code will be reviewed during the 2019-20 school year and, if necessary, amended.

## 13. Ratification & Communication

*Bord Bainistíochta Ghaelscoil na Cille* officially ratified the revision of this policy on February 27th 2019

This revised version is available on the school website [www.gaelscoilnacille.scoilnet.ie](http://www.gaelscoilnacille.scoilnet.ie) and all parents have been notified by email of its revision.

Sínte \_\_\_\_\_ (Cathaoirleach)

## Reference Section

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