



S.N Mhuire, Moynalvey

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by In School Management of SN Mhuire in consultation with all staff members, the members of the Board of Management, the senior students, the Parents Association and the entire parent body. It was devised during the third term 2019/20.

Rationale

The Board of Management of SN Mhuire decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is relevant and current to the growing numbers and changing shape of our school.

It 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:

The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;

The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;

The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;

The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school

Relationship to the Ethos of our school

SN Mhuire seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. Our code of behaviour reflects the vision of the child at the centre of the learning process and we hope to ensure that each child is provided with experiences that are relevant and age appropriate to his/her needs in a disruptive free environment. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a

significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively

Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of our school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be;

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by the statement; 'Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí' (praise the child and she/he will grow)
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding

principle governing this code is respect – respect for ourselves and others and their property.

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules" (see Appendix 1), each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter in September of each new school year, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students have a role to play in modelling good behaviour and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during all school related activities.

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code and development of positive behaviour strategies. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

Our vision statement going forward will be 'Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí.'

We will use the following strategies to promote Positive Behaviour;

- Praise & recognition
- RESPECT Approach
- Positive play in the playground
- Buddy systems
- Golden Rules
- The Golden Book (Junior end of the school)
- Stamp & sticker systems
- Whole school acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Termly Newsletter which the children can contribute to
- Reward systems in the class for positive behaviour (additional yard time, Golden time, Homework Passes, etc)
- Behaviour contracts
- Visit to another teacher or the Principal for praise of good behaviour or neat work
- Variation motivational strategies & reward systems within each classroom

To facilitate new members of staff in becoming familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be included in all teachers' documents. The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

Rewards and Sanctions

The following strategies will be used by all teachers:

Praise

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a child's exercise book
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class
- A reward system – student of the week/occasional treats
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents – either written or verbal communication
- Entry to the The Golden Book (Junior end of the school)

Disapproval

The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the nature of the strategies employed. The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour:

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Time out (Age appropriate including advising child about reflecting on their behaviour) during Yard Time.
- Temporary removal from group (within the class)

A new 'card' system was agreed and will be introduced by teachers in September 2020 to help children take responsibility and improve their behaviour within their class and minimise disruption to learning.

If a child's behaviour is disrespectful or disruptive they will:

Get a Verbal reminder with a visual card,
Yellow card
Orange card
Red card

If a child receives a red card they will:

1. Have a note sent home to parents and
2. Be excluded from Golden Time/Fun Friday/Activity chosen by class teacher and complete a reflection sheet on the Friday of that week.

Each week will start with a clean slate.

If however a child gets 3 Red cards in one month, parents and child will be asked to meet with the principal to discuss how behaviour must improve.

Steps to deal with repeated misbehaviour:

1. Reflection sheet (signed by parent and kept on file by teacher)
2. Withdrawal from class and sent to another teacher/classroom during privileged activity
3. Verbal communication with parents/guardians
4. Withdrawal of privileges
5. Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal
6. Formal written communication with parents/guardians

7. Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management
8. Formal meeting with between Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management and parents/guardians
9. Suspension

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. (card system) Teachers can use a problem solving approach in generating solutions & strategies with the pupil. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to “catch” repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, SESS, HSE or other agencies, where applicable.

Classification of Misbehaviours

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

- Interrupting class work
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian)
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures
- Name calling
- Minor infringement of the school rules
- Talking out of turn
- Not wearing appropriate uniform

(this list is not exhaustive)

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour

Card System in place from September 2020

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Verbal reprimand
- Time out (yard)
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent
- Instances of yard misbehaviour in the yard incident book and informing class teacher.

Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows, using one or more strategy:

Phase 1

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom)
- Referral to another teacher/classroom with specific work when privileges are withdrawn
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)

Phase 2

- Child will be sent to the Principal in office
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of continuous misbehaviour (3 RED cards in one month)
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour
- Class teacher and/or Principal will meet with one/both parents
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Blackmail
- Stealing

- Persistently not working to full potential
- Damaging others' property
- Bullying
- Answering back a teacher
- Continuously not completing homework
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Using unacceptable language
- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Deliberate, continual disobedience
- Spitting

(this list is not exhaustive)

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)

Teachers will take steps as outlined for Phase 1 above, but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour;

1. Child will be sent to the Principal
2. An account of all incidents will be entered in the relevant Incident book
3. Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of misbehaviour
4. Class teacher or Yard duty teacher and Principal will meet with one/both parents;
5. Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal

Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- Parents will be invited to meet class teacher, the principal and/or the chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour
- Suspension will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.
- Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained)

Gross Misbehaviour

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Smoking
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Deliberately injuring any member of the school community
- Setting fire to school property
- Purposely activating school fire alarm
- Deliberately leaving taps (fire hose) etc. turned on
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting) Vandalism
- Serious inappropriate behaviour
- Assault

Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned. The Board of Management has deferred responsibility to the Principal to impose an initial sanction of up to three days. Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days. When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a

satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the student (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the board and the principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case (see p.81, Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

Misbehaviour on the Yard

To pre-empt incidents of misbehaviour on yard, our whole school approach focuses on RESPECT– respect for yourself, respect for others, respect for the environment. We encourage pupils to take responsibility should they accidentally hurt another child, thus showing respect for that individual. This ties in with the Junior Golden Rules of ***'Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words' (to be implemented September 2020)***

Incidents of yard misbehaviour or verbal abuse of staff will be dealt with as follows:

The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will do the following;

- Impose a period of "time out" where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
- Teacher Reports in Time Out incident book.
- Inform the class teacher.
- 3 Time Outs reports and the child is removed from the yard for a full breaktime. The principal will speak with the child and the parents will be informed.

Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's Homework journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity. In specific cases a shorter school day may be implemented where a pupil is having severe difficulties coping with a full day. This would be agreed between the principal teacher and Parents and BOM.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the Principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Others who may also attend these meetings include; class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty and Chairperson of the Board of Management. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour, because of educational need. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school

and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. 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)

Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in a specific journal and are retained until students reach 21 years. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents will be informed in writing when their child has been absent for 12+ days of school. Under current legislation, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

Code of Conduct for Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/Principal through the school office
- Respect teachers' right to privacy by not contacting them on their personal or home phones about school issues
- Always speak in a positive manner about the school and encourage their children to do likewise
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
- Label pupils coats and other property
- Supervise their young children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school
- Respect and obey any parking rules and restrictions outside the school at drop-off and pick-up times
- Refrain from bringing family pets/dogs into the school yard (even if on a lead)

- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

Protocols for Dealing with Aggressive or Violent Parents/Guardians of the School

The vast majority of Parents/Guardians, carers and others visiting the school are supportive of the school. However, on occasion, a Parent/Guardian can have a negative attitude towards the school and sometimes, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards school staff.

The school expects its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to diffuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues.

However, all staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and the right, in extreme cases, of appropriate self-defence.

The school expects Parents/Guardians and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where Parents'/Guardians' behaviour is unacceptable.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- Spreading malicious gossip
- Shouting at school staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- Physically intimidating a member of staff e.g. standing very close to him/her.
- The use of aggressive hand gestures.
- Threatening school staff
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person.
- Writing abusive comments about a member of staff on paper or online
- Swearing at a member of school staff
- Pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching or kicking.
- Spitting
- Racist, sexist or personal comments
- Breaking the school's security procedures
- Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Gardaí being informed of the incident.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behaviour.

Implementing Procedures for Dealing with Aggressive/Violent Behaviours

When a Parent/Guardian or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff, the Principal or an appropriate senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues, or where there is an extreme act of violence, threatened violence or refusal to leave the premises, a parent/guardian may be banned by the Principal and the Board of Management from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:

The Parent/Guardian will be warned, in writing, from the Board of Management, that she/he may be banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that an injunction may follow.

Where an assault, threatened assault or refusal to leave the premises has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Gardaí will be included.

Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Health and Safety (Covid – 19)

Amendments to Behaviour Policy Resulting from Covid-19

Behaviour Principles

In light of the need for children to behave differently and to follow specific rules on their return to school during the Covid-19 pandemic, this amendment to the Behaviour Policy outlines specific changes to guidance that pupils and parents will have to follow. Our guiding principle when making any changes or adjustments to policy is to be able to keep all of our children, families and staff safe and place their wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do.

These amendments will need to be communicated to pupils, parents and staff.

Behaviour Expectations:

- amended expectations about breaks or play times, including where children may or may not play
- clear rules about coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
- rewards and sanction system where appropriate if changed from main body of policy
- clear rules for pupils at home about conduct in relation to remote education
- Identify any reasonable adjustments that need to be made for students with more challenging behaviour.

School Routines and Procedures:

- following any altered routines for arrival or departure
- following instructions on who pupils can socialise with at school
- moving around the school as per specific instructions (for example, one-way systems, out of bounds areas, queuing)
- rules about sharing any equipment or other items including drinking bottles
- use of toilets

Hygiene and Health Expectations:

- following school instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing and sanitising
- expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal ('catch it, bin it, kill it') and avoiding touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- tell an adult if you are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus

Mental Health and Emotional and Spiritual Support:

- Curriculum changes to support children, e.g. social stories, circle time, SPHE
- Additional support that pupils can access above and beyond classroom provision if required

Support of Parents:

- Agree to **not** send their children to school if they are experiencing **any** symptoms of Covid – 19

- Arrive to school within twenty minutes if their child is moved to the isolation area in the school.
- Inform the school of any planned trips abroad where isolation upon return might be required.

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management of SN Mhuire on

Chairperson
Date

Principal
Date

Appendix 1

School Rules (to be implemented in September 2020)

Safety:

For my own safety and the safety of others –

- I should be careful coming to and going from school;
- I should always walk while in the school building;
- I should always show respect for my fellow pupils;
- I should bring a note of explanation following every absence;
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher.

Caring for Myself:

- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order;
- I should always endeavour to have my uniform clean and tidy;
- I should be in school by 9am each day;
- I should always line up at the start of the day and after play when I hear the school bell;
- I should always try to bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Chewing gum, fizzy drinks and crisps are not permitted;
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

Caring for Others:

- I should be kind and respectful to teachers, other school staff, fellow pupils and visitors to the school by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining orderly in my class and in the line;
- I should listen and behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn;
- I should obey my specific class rules and all rules or policies agreed by the school community;
- I should always show respect for my school by being careful not to damage furniture or any part of the building or the school grounds. I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks etc. home and by placing litter in the appropriate bin;
- I should show respect for the property of the teachers and of my fellow pupils;

- I should be truthful and honest at all times.

Bullying:

- I should never bully others.
- I should never allow others to bully me and if it happens I should tell my parents and my teacher.
- Bullying is always unacceptable

