



Code of Behaviour

Introduction

This policy was devised by staff, in consultation with parents and members of the Board of Management of Scoil Mochua. Consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of the individual students who attend this special school. This code of behaviour was established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to an education.

Scoil Mochua aims to create a happy, secure, safe learning environment for all of our students. We aim to ensure that the individuality of all students is recognised and supported and that staff members are supported and enabled to fulfil their responsibilities in a positive and safe environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Rationale

- It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23 (1).
- It is part of our developing School Plan.

The Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that may 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 relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour shall address:

In order to comply with these requirements, and in order to have the best chance of achieving its objectives,

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school.
- The plan for promoting good/positive behaviour
- The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour.
- The plan for implementing the Code of Behaviour
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion

Aims of the Code of the Behaviour

- To create a climate that encourages and reinforces good/positive behaviour.
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour.
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good/positive behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents/guardians
- To encourage consistency of response to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- To ensure that the school policies and strategies are widely known and understood.
- To provide guidelines for teachers, SNAs, CE workers, ancillary staff, and parents/guardians on expectations with regard to behaviour for individual students

Key Principles that underpin The Code of Behaviour

- Behaviour has meaning. It is not random. It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise.
- All behaviour is intended to communicate or achieve something.
- Behaviour tells us about a person's wants, needs and feelings.
- Behaviour can be learned. This means it can change.
- Behaviour takes place within a particular context and in relation to other people.
- Understanding the context is central to understanding the behaviour.

- What teachers, other adults and other students do in response to a student's behaviour is critical in influencing the choices students make about how they behave.
- Effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour.
- Positive acknowledgement is a very effective way of influencing and promoting good/positive learning behaviour.
- The quality of relationships affects behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

"The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in the school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school" (Circular 20/90)

- The Board have a responsibility to provide a safe and comfortable environment.
- The Board should support through regular reports and review of the policy.
- The Board should make efforts to facilitate staff training.
- Serious breaches of behaviour in the school will involve the BOM. This requires them to have a sound knowledge of procedures.

Principal:

The principal's responsibilities are to:

- Promote a positive school environment.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner which also takes into account the different abilities of individual students.
- Arrange for a review of the Code, as necessary.

Teachers and classroom staff

It is incumbent upon teachers that:

- All staff must familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour
- All staff must avail of and attend training and updating of behavioural approaches.
- The teaching of the Code of behaviour incorporates an awareness of the impact of special educational needs on the behaviour of the students in the school.
- The behaviour support team will support class teachers with individual student's difficulties and the formulation on Individual Behavioural Support Plans school and classroom based. (IBSPs)

- Each teacher must compile and make available for new staff Individual Pupil classroom-based plans.
- Teachers will teach and differentiate the Code of Behaviour appropriate to individual student's abilities.
- Teachers must display the visual code of behaviour adapted to the pupil's comprehension in their classroom environment.
- This Code of behaviour will be reinforced daily and referred to throughout each day in all classes.
- The Code will be displayed prominently and clearly using multimodal displays e.g. photographs, symbols, written agreements etc. (colour coded classroom display)
- Observance of the Code will be noted and praised with each class receiving pupil centred incentives/motivators.
- Language used by staff regarding the Code will be clear, concise and agreed at whole school and class levels.
- Colour coding, symbols, photographs and agreed text will be used as reinforcement strategies.
- Appropriate S.P.H.E., Drama and independence skills programmes will be used to support the Code of behaviour.

School Staff: (Including CE Workers, Ancillary Staff, Placement Students etc.)

It is incumbent upon staff that:

- All staff must familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour
- All staff must avail of and attend training and updating of behavioural approaches.
- All staff must comply with the school positive behavioural support code.
- All staff must be familiar with the pupils IBSP and implement it at the direction of the teacher and agreed plan.
- All staff must support a culture of observance i.e. use calm voices during class time; minimal noise levels in shared areas, awareness of minimum interruptions of classes.
- All staff must observe a school culture of a learning and teaching environment.
- All staff must be made aware of individual behavioural support programme which may include individual physical contact care, comfort, reassurance and restraint approaches.
- All staff share responsibility for the behaviour of all students in the school.
- All classroom staff must support the teacher in the development, teaching, maintenance, and review of good practice as outlined in the Code's implementation strategy.
- Placement students do not implement behaviour management programmes. They should inform the teacher if there is a problem.

Parents:

It is incumbent upon parents that:

“Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents. Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline” (Circular 20/90)

- Parental involvement is essential.
- The code of behaviour is communicated to parents on the enrolment of their child and parent training talks are provided each year where reviews are notified, code is reminded, and progress reported.
- It is important that parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's system of pupil's individual behaviour support plans to support a positive learning and teaching environment.
- It is important that parents attend behavioural meetings regarding their child when requested.
- Parents must cooperate with the principal, class teachers and the behaviour support team in the implementation of individual behavioural approaches and support plans for their children.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour and communicate new behaviours that may present themselves at home.
- Parents cooperate with Individual Home-School Behaviour Plans as necessary.

Students:

It is incumbent upon pupils that:

- Students will be expected and supported to follow the expectations of the Code of behaviour during their school day, on the bus, during school outings, both in school and when attending outside school events
- Students will be expected to be their best in learning at school.
- Students will be expected, as far as they are able, to realise that they are part of a group and that every member of the group deserves equal attention.

The standards of behaviour expected in the school.

The school's standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. They describe the behaviour expected of all members of the school community.

These standards are divided into four areas as follows:

1. **Being Safe:** To always behave in a safe and considerate manner to ensure no harm is caused to yourself or anybody else and no damage to your own property or school property. To always follow school rules to stay safe.
2. **Being the best you, you can be.** Having a positive attitude to learning, always trying to be your best.
3. **Follow the rules of communication:** Waiting your turn, using nice manners, use kind words and gestures, listening to others. Have kind hands and feet.
4. **Being Responsible & Respectful:** Taking care of all property, being kind and caring to others, working quietly, following teachers' directions, being helpful.

The plan for promoting good behaviour.

The Rationale supporting the plan.

- Promoting good behaviour is the focus of the Code of Behaviour.
- School management and staff should actively foster a school ethos, policies, and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and support inappropriate behaviour.
- All behaviours impacting negatively on learning should be categorised under each or all the agreements listed below.
- The main goal of the code of behaviour is to foster, promote and support behaviours required for learning.
- The code consists of four central agreements linked to the above four standards.
- Each agreement is based on human rights.
- Each agreement involves all rights and responsibilities.

Agreements:

All behaviours supportive of learning fall into each and all the above agreements:

1. Safety (red)
2. Learning (green)
3. Communication (pink)
4. Respect & responsibility (blue)

Actions:

1. These agreements need to be taught, understood by everyone in the class, reinforced regularly in class, referred to often and displayed within each class.
2. Students need to be involved in determining the language to be used, the discussion around the agreements, the creation of visuals. Age range and ability should be appropriately differentiated.

3. When the Code of behaviour has been agreed by all students, it should be displayed in class along with a class photo and signatures.
4. It is understood that some students will require modifications, accommodations, and individual behavioural plans to support them in maintaining the code of behaviour agreements. These students will learn through sensory, mimic and modelling of class group over time.
5. Each teacher will be supported by a member of the Behaviour Support Team who will assist with the identification of modifications/accommodations needed through a practice-based support plan.
6. For some students their behaviour may be linked to their diagnosis (e.g. ADHD, ASD) and/or their level of understanding (i.e. degree of Intellectual Disability).
7. All staff have a responsibility to be mindful of this, and to differentiate teaching methods and approaches to meet the diverse needs of students, when teaching and implementing the code of behaviour.
8. Support and guidance may be obtained from the Behaviour Support Team if needed.

Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSP)

Every student in school that exhibits challenging behaviour will have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP).

- This plan is developed by member/members of the Behaviour Support Team in collaboration with the class teacher, the principal, the family, SNA's and other professionals where appropriate.
- Behaviour Support Plans are individualised plans which detail all the behaviours of concern displayed by the students, the function of the behaviour, strategies to reduce the likelihood of the behaviours being displayed, replacement skills to be taught, the protocol should challenge behaviour(s) be displayed and crisis intervention procedures where applicable.
- The PBSP will emphasize the development of appropriate behaviours rather than the suppression or elimination of inappropriate ones.
- PBSPs shall be developed, reviewed, and revised either directly by or under the supervision of management and classroom staff.
- Changes to the PBSPs and IEPs will be guided by the student's progress, or lack there of, indicated by the data taken on appropriate and inappropriate behaviours from the PBSP.

Agreements underpinning the Code of Behaviour

The four central agreements underpin the rights and the standards of behaviours within the school environment and class environment necessary for-

1. The school to provide an environment for staff and students where they have the right to be safe and secure.
2. The school to be a place for learning, a place where students and staff together are a learning community-a place where teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn.
3. The school to be a place where students and staff have a right to speak and communicate and are listened to.
4. The school to provide the right for students and staff to be respected through the provision of shared resources.

Bullying & Anti-Bullying

- Bullying is repeated behaviour of aggression, whether it be verbal, psychological, or physical conducted by an individual or groups against others.
- Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.
- At the centre of Scoil Mochua's response to bullying is the continued development of a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual. It is an important element of school policy to raise the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- Please also refer to School Anti-Bullying Policy and Bi Cinealta action plan for 2024/2025
- Bi Cinealta is the procedures to prevent and address Bullying Behaviour for primary and post Primary schools.

Dissemination of policy

- The Code of Behaviour will be made available to all parents and staff and will also be available in school on request.
- A copy of the Code of Behaviour will be given to the parents of every new pupil on enrolment.
- Staff will be trained in Team Teach techniques and will be made familiar with the Code of Behaviour and its working in the classrooms.

- All pupils will be taught the code of behaviour as part of SPHE lessons. They will also participate in the formation of class agreements in the areas of safety communication respect and learning.

Suspension and Expulsion

Points of Note:

- Gross misbehaviour may warrant suspension.
- The Board of Management has sole responsibility for suspension and expulsion.
- All procedures to exclude pupils will have due process and fairness.
- Exclusion will only be used when all other means of dealing with behaviour have been tried and have failed.
- There will always have been previous communication with parents regarding misbehaviour.
- Parents will be invited into the school to discuss the intention to exclude.

Suspension

If a pupil misbehaves on a continuous basis, or if there is a serious incident of misbehaviour, it may become necessary to suspend a pupil.

- The Health and Safety of staff as well as the Health and Safety of pupils will be taken into consideration when deciding on a particular course of action.
- The principal shall inform the educational welfare officer, by notice, in writing, when a student is suspended from school for a period of not less than 6 days.
- Parents/guardians are invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher and the principal.
- If suspension is being invoked, the parent is informed and then confirmation of the duration of the suspension is provided in writing.
- The maximum period of an initial suspension is three school days.
- A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of ten school days to allow for consultation with the pupil's parents. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed and following a case conference involving the interested parties, a pupil may be allowed to attend school for only part of the day.
- Returning from Suspension The school will use the period of suspension to review all supports in place for the student and put further supports (where

possible) to help the student become successful in school to reduce the likelihood that a suspension will be put in place again.

Grounds for removing a suspension.

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

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

- The school will take significant steps to address the behaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:
- Meeting with parents/guardians to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Ensuring that all other possible options/interventions have been tried. Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, CDNT, the National Behavioural Support Service (NCSE), National Council for Special Education). If when all supports and interventions mentioned above are exhausted and the student's continued presence in school is still a significant risk to the health and safety of other students or staff members, then expulsion may be considered as a last resort.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, "A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an education welfare officer" (Section 24:4) "It is the right of a Board of Management to take such reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured." (Section 24:5).

Appeals Procedure

Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents/guardians (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management including:

1. Permanent exclusion from a school

2. Suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in a school year.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents/guardians.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children.

- The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:
- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Email
- Aladdin Text
- Phone call.
- IEP meetings in December
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November/December and May/June
- End of year reports to parents at the end of the school year
- Consultation throughout the year
- Aladdin app for daily communication
- Incident report form
- Parental notification of an incident form
- Through the parents' association (PA), parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies pertinent to them.
- Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in an email.

Outside agency support

If behaviours are of particular concern and additional support/advice is required, the school will (with informed consent from the parents) seek additional support from the Children Network Disability Team (CDNT) team, NCSE behaviour advisor team.

Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

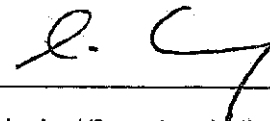
Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2025.

This policy will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every three years. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian, or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The next review of this policy will occur before or during the school year 2027/2028.

Signed: 

Chairperson of Board of Management



Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management