

Scoil Mochua Special School

Code of Behaviour Policy

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

Review due:

Code of Behaviour

Scoil Mochua

Introduction & Rationale

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.

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.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 sets out certain matters that must be included in a Code of Behaviour. Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 says:

A Code of Behaviour shall specify—

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

In order to comply with these requirements, and in order to have the best chance of achieving its objectives, the Code of Behaviour should address:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school
- The plan for promoting good 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

1. Aims of the Code of the Behaviour

- To create a climate that encourages and reinforces good 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 help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood
- To provide guidelines for teachers, SNAs, CE workers, ancillary staff and parents on expectations with regard to behaviour for individual students

2. 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.
- Behaviour tells us about a person's wants, needs and feelings. All behaviour is intended to communicate or achieve something.
- 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 learning behaviour.
- The quality of relationships affects behaviour.

3. 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

It is incumbent upon teachers that;

- The teaching of the Code incorporates an awareness of the impact of special educational needs on the behaviour of the students in the school
- Teachers will teach and differentiate the Code of Behaviour appropriate to individual student's abilities
- The Code 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.
- Observance of the Code will be noted and praised with each class receiving age appropriate incentives
- Language used by staff with regard to 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
- The behaviour support team will support class teachers with individual student's difficulties and the formulation on Individual Behavioural Support Plans (IBSPs)
- Each teacher must compile and make available for new staff Individual Pupil Passports

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

- 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 support a climate 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 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 teacher if there is a problem.

Parents.

“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 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 incentives and consequences.
- 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
- Parents cooperate with Individual Home-School Behaviour Plans as necessary.

Students

- Students will be expected and supported to follow the Code in class, during play or break time, on the bus, during school outings, both in school and when attending outside school events
- Students will be expected to do their best in order to reach their full potential
- 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.

4. 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;

Being Respectful: using nice manners, being kind and caring, working quietly, using appropriate language, following teachers' directions, being helpful, listening, waiting your turn to speak etc.

Being Responsible: taking care of property, doing homework, arriving on time, having the things you need, following class and school rules, making appropriate judgements about what should be at school, eating a healthy and nutritious lunch, putting litter in the bin etc.

Being Safe: acting in a considerate, safe manner, playing safely, being careful not to be rough or harm others in any way etc.

Being Honest: telling the truth even when it's tough, 'owning up' when you're in the wrong, telling an adult when you see someone being hurt deliberately etc.

Being the Best you can be: Having a positive attitude, always trying to do your best - even when it's not your favourite thing to do.

This code is to be adhered to by all members of the school community; Principal, Teachers, SNAs, CE Workers, Placement Students and Ancillary Staff.

5. The plan for promoting good behaviour

5.1 The Rationale supporting the Plan

Promoting good behaviour is the focus of the Code. School management and staff should actively foster a school ethos, policies, and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour. All behaviours impacting negatively on learning can be categorised under each or all of the agreements listed below.

The main goal of the code is to foster, promote and support behaviours required for learning. The code consists of four central agreements, each agreement is based on human rights and each agreement involves both rights and responsibilities.

5.2 Agreements:

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

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

5.3 Action Points:

1. These agreements need to be taught, understood by everyone in the class, reinforced regularly in class, referred to often, praised, given appreciation and reviewed termly. The Behaviour Support Team will support teachers with lesson plans.
2. Students need to be involved in determining the language to be used, the discussion around the agreements, the creation of visual displays highlighting and giving prominence to the four class and whole school agreements. Individual classes of age range and ability will be appropriately differentiated.
3. Once the Code has been agreed by all students, it will 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 whole class agreements. Some students will learn through sensory, mimic and modelling of class group over time. To this end, each teacher will be supported by a named member of the Behaviour Support Team who will assist with the identification of modifications/accommodations needed through a practice based support model.
5. 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). 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. Support and guidance may be obtained from the Behaviour Support Team if needed.
6. Figure 1 explains the School Wide Positive Behavioural Support Model. This encompasses Support for All, Support for Some, Support for a Few.

5.4 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

5.5 Unwanted Behaviours

An unwanted behaviour is defined as any behaviour that impinges on the safety, learning, communication or respect of others.

- **Responding to any behaviours that impinge upon Safety:**

Any behaviour that impinges on the safety of staff, students or student's personal safety warrants immediate removal from the classroom environment- staff member will use a gesture, visual prompt to indicate unwanted behaviour and will say "That's a red, you need to go to the Think-Time area". Inform the student of the consequence. The student is guided and supported to the Think-Time area where he/she will remain for an appropriate time based on age and cognitive ability.

When the student is calm the teacher will:

1. Debrief the student (what happened and why)
2. Acknowledge (I did it)
3. Correct the situation (apologise and clean up)

- **Responding to behaviours that impinge on Learning, Communication or Respect:**

Stage 1: Labelling behaviour at appropriate level:

Call students name, point to particular agreement, refer to colour code, label behaviour, wait for student to change behaviour and refocus-thank and praise for good choice.

Stage 2: If the behaviour persists:

Student who persists- behaviour will be named “ x you are still calling out etc. and I need you now to return to that’s your second reminder”. Refer to colour code and agreement. Wait for student to change behaviour, congratulate and acknowledge good choice.

Stage 3: Behaviour continues or escalates-

“You need to go to our Think-time area, take a break to think about what you’re doing and come back into us in a few minutes. This is your third reminder in the blue area”. Student is given the colour card to think about.

Designated person monitors time and after 3 minutes or if students indicates readiness to return earlier, student returns and work continues. Before next natural break or lesson end teacher has brief chat with student and enquires as to what was the problem? Praise, return and reassures student about positive inclusion in class incentives.

Stage 4. Continuous refusals and escalations of behaviour

1. A loss of privileges will occur at this stage and will be implemented with immediate effect. This may include child being excluded from a class visit to the garden/library/hall-time.
2. A note will be written in homework diary describing behaviour and sanction implemented.
3. When the student is calm the teacher will engage the in restorative justice procedures (similar to 5.5):
 - Debrief the student (what happened and why)
 - Acknowledge (I did it)
 - Correct the situation (apologise and clean up)
4. Where continuous escalations/refusals occur teacher will keep a record and track patterns of behaviour to ascertain triggers. This is the ‘Support for Some’ stage, the tracking of behaviours will serve as a basic functional assessment of behaviour. This will inform the child’s Individual Behaviour Plan. This may involve accommodations/modifications to timetable/class work etc. for a period of time.
5. A meeting will be arranged with parents to discuss behaviours. Efforts will be made to establish if the behaviours are happening at home also and support will be offered. Reference will be made to The School Code of Behaviour.
6. The School Behaviour Support Team will be consulted.

6. Bullying & Anti-Bullying

- Bullying is repeated 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. However, when the behaviour is systemic and ongoing, it is bullying. It may manifest itself in many forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, isolation, name-calling and “slagging”.
- 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

7. 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.

8. Suspension and Expulsion

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.

1. Parent is invited in to discuss the matter with the class teacher and the Principal.
2. If suspension is being invoked, the parent is informed and then confirmation of the duration of the suspension is provided in writing.
3. The maximum period of an initial suspension is three school days.
4. 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.

Suspension

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.

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

Expulsion

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.

Ratification of Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every two school years.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management:

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____