

Breaffy National School.

Code of Behaviour and Policy on Suspensions and Expulsions

Code Of Behaviour/Discipline

Breaffy NS.,
Breaffy,
Castlebar

Mission Statement

St John's N.S. promotes Gospel values in a learning community, where children can grow in knowledge and understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

Children enrolled in our school and their parents are required to co-operate with and support the School / Board of Management's Code of Behaviour as well as other policies on curriculum, organization and management.

We are fully committed to offering excellence in education by:

- Promoting the highest possible achievement for our pupils;
- Encouraging children to grow within the Catholic faith;
- Establishing the foundations for lifelong learning;
- Welcoming input from parents to complement the skills and experience of our professional teaching staff;
- Ensuring that our school is central to the parish, reaching out to embrace the wider community;
- Uniting all staff, parents, Parents Association and B.O.M. in our aim to be a leading school in the Diocese of Tuam.

Our aim is that all children should leave St John's N.S. with the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, an enthusiasm for learning, a thirst for knowledge, an appreciation of their religion and the world in which they live and, above all, many happy memories

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of

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honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
- To have a safe working environment for all staff and pupils.

For the purposes of this policy:

- **suspension** is considered to be the withdrawal of permission from a pupil to attend school for a specified period of time while,
- **expulsion** is considered to be the permanent exclusion of a student from this school.

School Ethos

In Saint John's National School our ethos is best expressed, helped to develop and enriched as a result of the continued interaction between a shared dialogue on the core values of the school (including the Patron, trustees, Board of Management, Principal, Staff, Parents and Pupils) and the daily practices that endeavor to embody these values.

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Ethos is established and sustained by those repeated practices and traditions, by the beliefs and attitudes promoted and by the goals aspired to by the school community.

In the case of St John's National School, the following characteristics will be sought with the general ethos experienced and promoted by the school community.

- As a formal agent of education within the Catholic community, the school models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are inspired by Gospel values.
- Christ, as the source of those values, is a familiar and attractive reality for the teachers and pupils.

General Principles

1. All students and teachers have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. To achieve this, all schools need to maintain high standards of student behaviour.
2. There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and expulsion are the options available to the Principal and/or the Board of Management in these situations. (Examples of "unacceptable behaviour" are contained in the Code of Behaviour document.)
3. Collaboration between Board of Management, school staff, students and parents is an important feature of Behaviour Management in schools. All should be fully aware of the suspension and expulsion procedures and their place in the context of the school's Code of Behaviour.
4. Suspension is only one strategy within a school's Code of Behaviour. Its primary purpose is to act as a corrective support rather than a punishment for misbehaviour. Our school encourages positive behavior and reminds pupils regularly about the standards of behavior required. As a school we endeavour to encourage positive student behaviour. Suspension is most effective when it highlights the parents'/guardians' responsibility for taking an active role, in partnership with the school, to work with their child to enable the child's behaviour to change. The school

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will work with parents/guardians with a view to assisting a suspended student to rejoin the school community as quickly as possible.

5. Suspension allows students time to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour which led to the suspension and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school's expectations in the future. It also allows time for school personnel to plan appropriate support for the student to assist with successful re-entry.
6. The Principal (or in his absence the Deputy Principal) has authority, to suspend a pupil/student for a limited time
7. If, in the judgment of the Principal, a pupil should be expelled, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management for decision. NEWB Guidelines
8. The Board of Management and the Principal will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the principles of procedural fairness.
9. In implementing these procedures, the Principal and Board will ensure that no student is discriminated against on any of the following grounds:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Marital status
 - c. Family status
 - d. Sexual orientation
 - e. Religion
 - f. Age
 - g. Disability
 - h. Race
 - i. Membership of the Travelling Community
10. The Board of Management will also ensure that the implementation of these procedures will take into account such factors as:
 - a. The age and state of health of the pupil
 - b. The pupil's previous record at the school
 - c. Any particular circumstances unique to the pupil who might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour, e.g. strained or traumatic domestic situations.
 - d. The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour.
 - e. The degree of severity of the behaviour, the frequency of its occurrence and the likelihood of its recurring.
 - f. Whether or not the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the pupil or other pupils in the school.
 - g. Whether or not the behaviour occurred on school premises or when the pupil was otherwise in the charge of the school staff or when the pupil was on the

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way to or from school. An important consideration in cases of doubt is the extent to which behaviour away from the school had a serious impact on the life of the school.

- h. The degree to which behaviour was a violation of one or more rules contained in the school's Code of Behaviour and/or School Policies and the relative importance of the rule(s).
 - i. Whether the incident was perpetrated by the pupil on his or her own or as a part of a group.
11. Depending on the nature and extent of the misbehaviour the support of other agencies such as the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) or the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought by the Board of Management.
12. The Principles of Natural Justice are fundamental to the implementation of these procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to all of our pupils:

- during the school day
- while on school related outings, trips, activities and during after-school activities.
- while in school uniform outside the school grounds
- where the misbehaviour, though occurring outside the school grounds, relates to the students membership of the school community, such as an interference with the property or person of a member of the school staff.

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.

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Every effort will be made by all staff members to adopt a positive approach to the question of behavior in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilized by the teachers.

Behavioural Expectations

- All pupils are expected to treat staff and their fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of foul language and any form of bullying or intimidation is unacceptable.
- Pupils must respect all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils must have all books and required materials.
- Pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability and to present written exercises neatly.
- Any form of behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and feel safe is unacceptable.

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

We believe that a strong sense of community within the school will nurture a high standard of behaviour. This will be achieved by having a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents.

Definitions

1. In this policy the term "parent" includes a guardian of the student and any person at law liable to maintain the pupil or entitled to his/her custody.
2. In this policy the term "pupil" includes any student whose guardian is any person other than the parent/s.
3. Any reference to the Board in this policy relates to the School Board of Management.

School Rules

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School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and wisely.

- Pupils must enter and leave the school building in an orderly fashion.
- Pupils must not behave in any way, which endangers themselves or others. Rough play comes into this category.
- Any form of threatening behaviour is unacceptable.
- Any instructions or directions given by the supervising teacher are to be complied with.
- Pupils line up in an orderly manner at the end of breaks.
- Pupils must walk inside the school.
- Pupils may not enter the school building during breaks without the express permission of a teacher.
- If, due to inclement weather, the pupils are allowed to remain indoors, they must remain seated unless given permission to do otherwise by the supervising teacher. Games, toys, and plenty of reading materials are available to the pupils on wet days.
- Pupils are not allowed play football in the yard before or after school. (Before 9 or after 2.40)
- Pupils are expected to arrive on time at 9am and leave promptly at 2.40.

In addition children must:

- Show kindness and willingness to help others
- Show willingness to follow instructions from staff immediately
- Show courtesy and good manners
- Show readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Ask permission to leave the classroom
- Take responsibility for your own work

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. These rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

In **St John's N.S.** our Code of Behaviour is very strongly linked to our S.P.H.E. programme. It incorporates our Walk Tall Programme and Circle Time (which some teachers use).

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Our positive approach to disciplinary issues stresses the importance of the rewarding of good behaviour and of positive attitudes. This positive approach entails issues such as the promotion of good attendance, the encouragement of good class behaviour, the development of positive social skills and providing the pupils with sources of encouragement for self-motivated learning and the development of skills necessary for independent study.

The main issue in dictating how a student behaves is his/her own self-esteem. Our combination of Walk Tall, positive encouragement and issue solving and our general approach to discipline, we aim to ensure high self-esteem and self-worth in every student.

The students themselves are involved, at class level, in negotiating (a) an agreed set of Rules, and acceptable behavioural standards.

This system of positive discipline puts emphasis on recognizing and affirming the children who behave well rather than taking up a lot of class time correcting and reprimanding that small minority who behave badly.

The pupils are au fait with the rules and are aware of exactly what is implied by each one of them.

All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given;

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal

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based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity /frequency of such misdemeanours. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher.

Examples of minor misdemeanours

Interrupting class work / Arriving late for school / Running in the school building / Leaving seat without permission at lunchtime Leaving litter around the school / Not wearing correct uniform / Not completing homework without good reason /Not having homework signed / Being discourteous or unmannerly /

In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour though not exhaustive (see section on Suspension)

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning e.g. being constantly disruptive in class/telling lies/back-answering a teacher
- Leaving school premises during school day without permission
- Using unacceptable language
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in yard.
- Bringing weapons to school
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour though not exhaustive (See section on expulsion)

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- The student's behavior is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the teaching and learning of others and the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.

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- The student's behavior is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community, eg, Community Care services provided by Health Boards

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class/school and /or temporary removal to another class .
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges (This is reviewed continuously)
6. Detention during break (This is reviewed often)
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention or removal from peers/ class, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. The procedures for suspension or expulsion are clearly outlined in this policy.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension or expulsion may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Suspension will be a Board of Management decision.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period of three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents or a maximum of 5 days in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the suspension and expulsion section of this policy.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule 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.

A decision to suspend a student requires that:

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- The student and parents are informed of the complaint and
- Parents and students are given an opportunity to respond.

Decisions to expel should follow fair procedures including:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
2. A recommendation to the board of management by the principal.
3. Consideration by the board of management of the principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing, including informing the Education Welfare Board of its opinion. (The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 days from the date that the NEWB receives this written notification).
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

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 will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Reinstatement following a Section 29 Appeal being upheld

The BOM will give serious consideration to any recommendations made by a Section 29 Appeal hearing committee in particular where this relates to health and safety concerns .

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules.

Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times.

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Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also, from support services within the wider community, eg Community care services provided by Health Boards.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Home/School Communication

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy, which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made by Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used at all levels within the school:

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- Individual consultation: This occurs where a parent asks for an interview with a teacher or has been invited to visit the school to exchange information or to discuss matters of concern. A note to/from the class teacher requesting such an appointment is always essential. It is also necessary that the purpose of the visit be stated so that teachers/parents may undertake whatever preparation is necessary with regard to information and records.
- Appointment with Principal: Parents should contact the School Secretary if they wish to meet the Principal.
- Formal parent/teacher meetings are generally held during the first or second term.
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school in pupils homework journal.
- Details of school holidays, school closures and staff meetings are always communicated in writing by text message.
- In the case of inclement weather, notification re school closure is announced on MWR radio station and by Text.
- If, due to illness or any other cause, a child is absent from school, an explanatory note should be forwarded to the class teacher.
- In the case of medical or dental appointments, the Teacher should be informed.
- Children are not allowed home early at any time without a written request from the parents or guardians, or without being collected in person by a responsible adult. At all times, permission to leave the premises must be granted and the child should be signed out at the Front Office.

The role of a parent

The role of a parent in an approach to positive behaviour is extremely important. The Educational Welfare Act recognises this fact. Teachers have also found that parental involvement in acknowledging positive behaviour, through the use of a note in the homework journal or in making reports to parents is very useful. Research has shown that children regard a positive note home as the best reward, while a negative note home was seen as the worst sanction.

Characteristics of a Positive School Environment may include:

- Positive ethos
- Positive behaviour and language
- Open and inclusive communication
- Respect-treat all as equals

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- Good relations between teaching staff, non-teaching staff and pupils
- Fairness-Justice-Equity
- Professionalism-Collaboration-Collegiality
- Affirmations
- Communication /Body language
- Making mistakes
- Motivation and rewards
- Goal setting
- Positive attitude
- Visualisation
- Avoiding the word 'Don't'
- Laughter and fun - creates a learning atmosphere
- Appropriate preparation and delivery of the curriculum
- High expectations - always aim high
- Recognition of strengths and talents of colleagues
- Consistency in dealing with adults and children
- Flexibility around routine standards and rules
- Compassion, warmth, authenticity, empathy
- Appropriate preparation and delivery of the curriculum

This policy derives from the Mission Statement and is directly linked to its aims, in particular: our aims to treat every person with respect.

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Rationale

Our rationale for this policy is as follows:

1. To satisfy the legislative requirements associated with legislation including:
 - a. Sections 15(2)(d) and 28(1) of the Education Act 1998
 - b. Sections 23 and 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
 - c. Section 7(2)(d) Equal Status Act
2. To satisfy the NEWB Guidelines: Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools
3. To provide a transparent framework for the fair application of the sanctions of suspension and expulsion.

Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- set out clearly how to deal with a suspension or an expulsion without impugning the rights of an individual pupil,
- promote good behaviour and to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour,
- afford all of our pupils a safe environment, and
- encourage an environment in which all pupils can learn.

Suspension Procedures

- The authority to suspend for a period of three days (or in exceptional circumstances five days, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion) is vested in the Principal, or in the absence of the Principal the Acting Principal, subject to the right of the parents/guardians (or a pupil who is 18 years or more) to appeal to the Board of Management.
- The power to suspend for longer periods or to expel rests with the Board of Management
- The period of suspension shall be proportionate to the breaches of the school rules.
- Suspension is a serious sanction and may be considered in the following circumstances, but are not limited thereto:
 - Repeated, persistent, cumulative misdemeanors
 - Failure to recognise and submit to the authority of the school
 - Where other lesser school sanctions have failed to discourage misbehavior
 - Where the behaviour interferes with the learning environment

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- Serious incidents that may endanger the health, security, safety or welfare of the school community or any member thereof
- Where the behaviour results in serious damage to school property
- Truancy and leaving school without permission
- Behaviour which is illegal in nature
- Noncompliance with the school's policies
- Behaviour which seriously damages the reputation of the school and its community
- The use of obscene, offensive or abusive language in word or writing in the school or towards any person.
- Serious theft or wilful damage, abuse of, or destruction of school property, furniture or equipment, or the property of any person associated with the school. In such cases parents will be held liable.
- Serious fighting on the school premises or at any school sponsored activity.
- Failure to take direction from a staff member as to where a pupil is being directed if being removed from peers/class in an effort to deal sensitively with an alleged breach of our code of behavior.
- Bullying as in the Code of Behaviour.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse (including name-calling) of another student.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse (including name-calling) of a teacher, or the member of the school staff.
- Willful disobedience to the clear command of a teacher.
- Any action done with the intention of causing disruption of a class or the school.
- Anything in the Code of Behaviour which is not allowed on health & safety grounds.
- Any behaviour listed in the School Rules and regarded as Serious or Gross Misbehaviour
- Engaging in any form of unlawful/illegal behaviour.
- Other examples of such behaviour are set out in the Code of Behaviour

Certain of the above actions may also be grounds for expulsion depending on the circumstances. In such circumstances, students engaging in these actions will be referred to the Board of Management.

The circumstances under which suspensions may be imposed can be divided into three groups:

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1. Suspension for serious misbehaviour as per the school Code of Behaviour and the circumstances listed above.
2. Suspensions as a result of ongoing misbehaviour
3. Teachers will initially deal with disciplinary issues themselves within their own classroom. If this fails to resolve matters then the issue will be referred from teacher to to Deputy Principal / Principal.
4. However incidents of a serious nature may be referred directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Possible Interventions /Supports:

- Meeting with and to explore the circumstances of the incident/s giving the student an opportunity to be heard.
- Phone contact with parents
- Progress report
- Detention
- Temporary removal from a class
- Meeting with parents and student with a view to moving forward
- Student placed “On probation” for a period of time
- Positive behaviour plan.
- Referral to appropriate support services in and/or out of school. The intervention/s used will be appropriate to each case.
- If the ongoing misbehaviour has not improved then the option of suspension will be considered.

Immediate Suspensions

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary. This will include a situation where the continued presence of the student in the school at that time would represent a serious threat to the safety of either the student himself or of others in the school community or where the student’s behaviour is such that it is a serious threat to the learning process and/or a direct threat to the authority of the Principal.

Where there is repeated truancy or repeated and flagrant violation of the Code of Discipline a student may be sent home the next day he arrives in school or suspended the following day pending a meeting with the parents. Fair procedures will still be applied. The parents will be notified by phone of the immediate suspension and will be requested to attend the school without delay to discuss the matter.

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Automatic suspensions

Suspensions will also be imposed for named behaviours as per the school's Code of Behaviour. Fair procedures will still apply.

Suspensions pending a meeting with parents

Parents may be instructed to keep a pupil at home until they attend with him/her to discuss a serious incident or ongoing disruptive behaviour. It will be the responsibility of the parents to make arrangements for such a meeting. Fair procedures will apply.

Suspension pending a decision of the Board of Management

Suspension pending a decision of the Board of Management on a reference from the Principal where the student is a danger to the health and safety of himself or other members of the school community and/or a serious and ongoing impediment to the learning process and/or unwilling to accept the Code of Discipline and/or the authority of management and/or staff members.

Suspension after a decision to expel

Suspension after a decision to expel is taken by the Board of Management pending consultation with the Education Welfare Officer and the expiration of 20 school days, where the student, because of his/her prior record of misbehaviour, is expected to be a danger to the health and safety of himself or other members of the school community and/or a serious and ongoing impediment to the learning process and/or unwilling to accept the Code of Discipline and/or the authority of management and/or staff members.

Suspension Procedure

In the event that the Principal exercises his/her authority to suspend a student for a fixed duration, the following procedure will be used:

- The Principal or other teacher delegated to do so by the Principal will interview the pupil who is given the opportunity to respond. The student will be informed of the precise allegations/grounds/evidence that gave rise to the potential suspension. An investigation will be carried out by Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head or other

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teacher. Other witnesses will be interviewed (if any and if necessary). A written account may be requested from all witnesses including the accused student/s.

- The parents/guardians of the student will be informed of the situation and may be invited to come to the school for a meeting to respond to the misbehaviour/incident, if there is any dispute as to the facts. In the interim parents may be instructed to keep the pupil at home until they attend with him/her to discuss the matter.
- Where parents do not comply with the request to contact/attend the school or otherwise make themselves available to discuss the matter within a reasonable time of the request to contact/attend then the Principal will decide the course of action to be taken. Such action may include a sanction of up to three days suspension (five days in exceptional circumstances) and/or a reference to the Board of Management for a longer term of suspension or expulsion.
- In cases where the suspension is to take effect immediately, such as in the interests of health and safety or good order and discipline, parents/guardians will be informed by telephone and/or text, with written follow up, if required.
- Pending the implementation of the suspension, the student may be withdrawn from his/her class.
- If it is decided that a suspension will take place parents will be informed in writing.
- If an incident is of a very grave nature the Principal may decide to suspend the student pending a Board of Management meeting, where all sanctions up to and including expulsion will be considered. In these circumstances Parents are obliged to collect their child when contacted by the school if requested by the Principal
- Parents will be informed of their right to appeal, to the Board of Management in the first instance.
- If a student is suspended for greater than 6 days cumulatively the Board/Principal will inform the EWO.
- Pending any appeal, the short term suspension remains in force.
- All suspension decisions include a formal letter of notification that will include:
 - Notice of the suspension
 - Effective date of the suspension
 - Duration of the suspension
 - Reasons for the suspension
 - Where appropriate, this letter may also include some or all of the following
 - Expectations of the student while on suspension
 - Procedure on return to school.
 - Reference to the importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter causing suspension.

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- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed of the suspension.
- Information of the appeal rights and procedures regarding the suspension.
- Requirements to be met for the student's return to school.
- A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of parent/guardians while suspended.

Suspension Removal

As the principles of natural justice demand that there should be available a right of appeal to a higher authority, a student aged over 18 years or his parents/guardians may appeal the Principal's decision to suspend to the Board of Management. Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. However, the school may insist that the student remain at home while the appeal proceeds. In the event that an appeal is successful, the suspension will be lifted and if the suspension has already been served, it will be expunged from the student's record.

Beyond success in an appeal a suspension may be lifted in the following circumstances:

1. An appeal against the suspension has been lodged pending the outcome of the appeal, (subject to the proviso, as set out above, that a short term suspension of three days or less (five days in exceptional circumstances) must be served pending the appeal, in the interest of health and safety and/or good order and discipline) OR
2. The term (length of time) of the suspension has been served, OR
3. The student with his parents/guardians have met with the school authorities and have given assurances that the misbehaviour that gave rise to the sanction is regretted and/or will not be repeated OR
4. In particular circumstances, when a formal apology in writing is submitted to the principal by the student and signed by a parent OR
5. If the sanction is imposed for reasons due to concern for safety and health, the cause of the concern no longer exists Or
6. New circumstances come to light after the suspension has been applied that would have mitigated the sanction had they been known beforehand OR
7. Other mitigating factors consistent with the application of the principles of natural justice.

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The letter of suspension will state what needs to be done (if necessary) for the particular suspension to be lifted. Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 school days, the parents/guardians, or a student aged over 18 years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information on how to appeal.

Suspension Completion

Upon completion of a suspension the student may be met by the Principal / Deputy Principal/Year Head on return to school. After suspension the following procedures may also apply for the formal reintroduction of the student into the school:

- Parents/guardians may be requested to attend with the student upon his return to school.
- A written or verbal apology may be required from the student for his misbehaviour.
- The student may be required to enter into a contract of good behaviour or other conditions that may be specified before returning to school.

EXPULSION

Expulsion Principles

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school on a student and as such, will only be exercised by the Board of Management in relation to cases of extreme indiscipline. In cases where the Principal judges that a student's actions are such that expulsion should be considered, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management. Given the severity of the potential sanction, the school, in accordance with the principles of natural justice, will investigate extreme indiscipline cases thoroughly in advance of any hearing that could result in expulsion.

Expulsion will be considered in cases where the indiscipline of a student is so pervasive that teaching and learning become extremely difficult and where school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities of changing the student's behaviour. Such cases include but are not limited to:

- The student being so disruptive that he/she is seriously preventing other students from learning

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- The student being uncontrollable or grossly insubordinate to school management or other staff members and not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority.
- Parents/Guardians being unable or refusing to exercise their responsibility for the student's behaviour
- The student's behaviour being a danger to himself or to others
- When guarantees of reasonable behaviour following repeated suspensions are not forthcoming or are not being met
- The student's conduct acting as a source of serious bad example and having an adverse influence on other students in the school.

Expulsion for first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that will result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the Code of Behaviour include but are not limited to:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Possession of and/or brandishing of an offensive weapon
- A serious act of violence or serious physical assault against any member of the school community or against any visitor thereto.
- Burglary or theft which results in loss or damage to school property or the property of members of the school community.
- Using and/or supplying drugs or other dangerous and illegal substances to others during school time or whilst on school trips/activities.
- Serious damage to school property or the property of members of the school community.
- Gross insubordination to the Principal or other staff members.

In the interest of ensuring a fair and even-handed system for the imposition of expulsion, the Board of Management will take account of the following factors in determining expulsion:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behavior
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of the expulsion

Expulsion Procedure

The school will follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- **Step 1:** A detailed investigation will be carried out by the Principal or under the direction of the Principal.
 - In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:
 - Inform the student and his parents/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour and that it could result in expulsion.
 - Give parents/guardians and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- **Step 2:** A recommendation will be given to the Board of Management by the Principal
 - Where the Principal forms the view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:
 - Inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
 - Ensure that parents/guardians have copies of records of the allegations against the student and copies of records of the investigation and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider the expulsion
 - Provide the Board of Management with copies of the same comprehensive records as are given to parents/guardians
 - Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing of the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
 - Advise the parents/guardians that they can make both a written and an oral presentation to the hearing.
 - The Principal may suspend the student pending the Board meeting, if necessary to protect health and safety, good order and discipline and the learning process.
- **Step 3:** Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing

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- The Board will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted and in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all the documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that any party who has involvement in the case will not be party to any deliberations.
- Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing where the Principal and the parents, will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. It will give the parents/guardians at least five days notice of the hearing. Parents/guardians must give two days notice in writing that they wish to make representations to the hearing. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.
- After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal, parents and student are not present for the Board's deliberations.
- **Step 4:** Deliberations of the Board and actions to follow the hearing
 - Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for its decision. The Board will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions, the next steps in the process, and that the Education Welfare Officer has been informed.
- **Step 5:** Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
 - The Principal will make all reasonable efforts to take part in consultations and meetings arranged by the Education Welfare Officer within the twenty SCHOOL days after notification of intention to expel.
- **Step 6:** Confirmation of the decision to expel
 - Where the 20 SCHOOL day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents/guardians will be told about their right to appeal and supplied with the standard forms on which to lodge an appeal. If the Board does not expel the student, it may recommend an alternative sanction in consultation with the Principal.

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The formal letter of notification to parents will include:

- The notice of exclusion
- The effective date of the exclusion
- The reasons for the exclusion
- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed of the exclusion
- A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians for the period of 20 SCHOOL days required by the Education Welfare Officer to examine alternative provisions for the education of the student.
- Information and documentation on Appeal rights.
- Expulsion Appeals

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal a decision of the Board of Management to expel a student to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Permanent exclusion may be appealed by a parent/guardian or by a student (over 18 years of age). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student. Any such appeal must be lodged within 42 calendar days of the decision of the Board of Management.

Footnote

Mr Justice Kearns (High Court 1999) expressed the opinion that there shouldn't be legal representation at B.O.M. meetings when dealing with pupil disciplinary matters. Ref. Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools-NEWB Chapter 12

Related Policies

Code of Behaviour and school rules, admissions policy, Health & Safety Policy, substance use policy, and anti-bullying Policy

Monitoring and Review (Roles and Responsibilities)

The Principal assumes the responsibility for monitoring the effective implementation of this policy. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, but not less often than every three years.

Complaints Procedure

It is in the interests of pupils, parents and teachers that good relations should exist between home and school. The teachers are willing to discuss any problems, which may

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arise from time to time. With mutual respect and goodwill, most problems can be resolved readily. Any query, question or inquiry made through the Board of Management Parents' Representatives will only be considered /answered when the request is made in writing and signed. Anonymous queries will not be considered at all.

The following steps should be followed when raising a concern or bringing a complaint about a behaviour matter:

Stage 1:

- A parent who wishes to make a complaint should meet with the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint by appointment.
- If the matter is not resolved, the parent should meet with the Principal by appointment.
- If the complaint is still not resolved, the parent should meet with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Stage 2:

- If the complaint is still unresolved, it should be lodged in **writing** with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The letter must be **dated** and **signed**.

The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Signed: Tom Canavan

**Signed: Seoirse O Morain
Reviewed by BOM 25th June
2018 .**

Chairperson of BOM

Secretary of BOM

Date of next review: October 2018 pending clarification.