



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR – THE PUPIL’S CHARTER

General Introduction

Scoil Mháirtín is a community of children, teachers, ancillary staff and parents. Each member of that community must be treated with respect and tolerance. The dignity and individuality of each member must be respected. A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and also between staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.

The well-being of the school as a community is dependent on this and also on the level of care and co-operation between its members. The purpose of this code is to achieve a happy, secure and well-ordered environment in which children can develop to their full potential. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to provide a framework, which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. Every effort is made by staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement can be utilised by teachers. This in the long run gives the best results.

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard to the health, welfare and safety of all members of the school community.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made to ensure that parents are well informed; that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are told not only when their child has misbehaved but when they have behaved particularly well.

The Code of Behaviour shall be implemented in such a manner as to reward good behaviour.

“Bíodh bhur solas ag taitneamh”

Formulation of the Code

In formulating this code, the Board of Management considered possible content of the code from representatives of the body of parents of pupils who attend the school. All members of the teaching staff were involved in planning the code. When first devised, a copy was made available to all parents.

Consideration was given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

The rules were kept to a minimum and are mostly stated in positive terms of what pupils should do as opposed to what they should not.

The code will be reviewed annually at the first Board of Management meeting.



Rationale

Scoil Mháirtín decided to review its code of behaviour because

- The existing policy is due for review and amendment
- It was identified as a priority area by the staff
- It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/09 on school discipline

Aims of the Code

- ❖ To ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated.
- ❖ To acknowledge the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.
- ❖ To develop self-discipline, respect and tolerance for others.
- ❖ To aid the efficient operation of the school and the structuring of in-class discipline.
- ❖ To maintain good order throughout the school and respect for the environment.
- ❖ To encourage good home/school communication.
- ❖ To foster a positive atmosphere in the school.

Understanding Behaviour

Our school gives many opportunities to staff to discuss and share understandings about behaviour.

- Behaviour and school discipline always has a slot for discussion at staff meetings and at meetings of the In School Management Team (I.S.M.).
- Staff frequently discuss behaviour informally with colleagues at break time, where deemed appropriate.
- Serious or repeated instances of misbehaviour are brought to the immediate attention of the Principal for discussion.

Parents are encouraged to help students to behave well at our school.

- A copy of our Code of Behaviour is distributed to all parents to read and discuss with their child on enrolment into Scoil Mháirtín.
- Our Rules for Good Behaviour are printed in our School Journal which is used by all students from First to Sixth Class. These rules are discussed in class with the Class Teacher each September and are then sent home to be read.
- All parents are made aware that a full copy of the Code is available on request at the School Office and on the school website.
- Parents and teachers discuss behaviour formally at formal Parent/Teachers meetings and also if invited in to discuss more serious incidents of misbehaviour should they arise.



Scoil Mháirtín encourages students to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships.

- Each child must read extracts of the school rules as printed in their School Journal.
- The subject of behaviour is discussed at Assembly regularly.
- Good behaviour and a good standard of class work and homework are rewarded.
- Teachers have class based reward systems in place in each class.
- Pupils are responsible for observing expected standards of behaviour and showing respect for themselves and others and the school.

Whole School Approach to the Code of Behaviour.

Review of Policies and Practices relating to the Code of Behaviour.

Key policies that currently operate in Scoil Mháirtín that support the Code of Behaviour are the Child Safeguarding Policy, the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment, the Anti Bullying Policy, and the Safety Statement.

These policies are checked and discussed at our staff meetings to see how they impact on student behaviour. There are sometimes occasions where the Code and practices arising from the Code may be reviewed and updated as a result of observations made at these discussions.

Opportunities for Staff to Work as a Team.

Staff work together as a team in developing a whole school approach to behaviour. They bring their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning, their expertise of what works to help pupils to behave well and their knowledge of the school and of the school community.

- At staff meetings the issue of behaviour is discussed and reflected on as a team.
- At I.S.M. meetings behaviour is looked at and dealt with as a team.

Opportunities for Pupils and Parents to Contribute to School Policy

Pupils:

- Existing Rules for Good Behaviour are discussed annually by pupils with their Class Teacher and parents.
- Pupils, under the direction of the Class Teacher, compile their own class rules, sanctions and reward systems.
- Pupils who are in the Student Council through discussions can make contributions to the school rules.
- Where incidents of misbehaviour arise, the particular incident may be discussed sensitively with the pupils to see how things might have been diffused earlier and how pupils should act should a similar incident occur in the future.



Parents:

- Parents' Representatives contribute to School Policy at Board of Management Meetings.
- Parents are presented with a copy of the Code of Behaviour in their Enrolment Pack.

SCHOOL RULES

We expect children to conform to general standards of behaviour and work, and we look for the support of parents in attaining these standards. Our school rules are simple and are designed largely to protect persons or property.

- Children are required to attend school regularly and to be punctual. If a child is absent, a notification from the parent to the school via email or Aladdin Connect is expected.
- Mobile phones, electronic devices (ipod, ipad, iwatch, etc.) and use of such devices is not allowed in school.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Children are expected to be polite and respectful to all staff and visitors.
- School uniform/tracksuit must be worn at all times.
- Children are expected to show respect for school property at all times. Drawings/markings on tables and chairs are considered to be causing damage to school property.
- All clothing should be marked clearly.
- Parents should regularly check homework.
- Parents should ensure their children have a proper night's sleep.
- Chewing gum is not allowed in school.
- In the interest of safety, we would ask that children would not wear any jewellery to school as there is a potential of injury to themselves or others (watches are excluded).
- Children are not allowed to leave the school premises without permission.
- Conventional hair styles only are allowed (no hair colouring).
- Make-Up is not allowed.



Expectations of Pupils:

SAFETY

For my own safety and that of others:

- (a) I should be careful coming to and going from school;
- (b) I should always walk while in the school building;
- (c) I should not interfere with others coming to or going from school;
- (d) I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal or Class Teacher;
- (e) I should never bring a mobile phone or electronic device (ipod, ipad, iwatch, etc.) to school.
- (f) I should never use online apps in such a way as to cause upset to other children, for example Snapchat, Tik Tok, etc

CARING FOR MYSELF:

- (a) I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my table/chair, school bag, books and copies in good order.
- (b) I should always be in school by 9:20 a.m.
- (c) I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day.
- (d) I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- (e) I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Chewing gum is not permitted.
- (f) I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

CARING FOR OTHERS:

- (a) I should be kind and respectful to staff and fellow pupils.
- (b) I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn. If I seriously misbehave or repeatedly misbehave, it will be noted by the teacher and I will receive a note home to notify my parents.
- (c) I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks etc. home.
- (d) I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- (e) I should be truthful and honest at all times.
- (f) If someone is hurt in the school grounds, report it immediately to the staff on yard duty.

BULLYING:

“Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological and physical aggression”

I should never bully others. I should never allow others to bully me or any other pupil, and if it happens I should tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.



Scoil Mháirtín is a "Bully-Free" zone.

BEHAVING IN THE YARD:

Misbehaviour in the yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/other pupils at risk:

- (a) I should enjoy playtime by playing safely in my class area.
- (b) **THE 3 NON NEGOTIABLES ON THE YARD:**
 - 1. I must at all times show courtesy, consideration, respect and tolerance to each member of staff (SNAs and teachers), my peers and all visitors to the school. Pupils must obey teachers and SNAs at all times.
 - 2. I know that wrestling, fighting, kicking, punching, teasing, slide tackling and horse play are strictly forbidden.
 - 3. I should never use bad language or name call.
- (c) I know that all types of bullying (physical, verbal, cyber/online bullying and exclusion) are strictly forbidden.
- (d) I should never leave the school yard / field without the permission of a member of staff.
- (e) I must show respect for my play area and yard equipment.
- (f) I must line up quietly with my class when the bell rings.
- (g) My parents will be notified concerning repeated misbehaviour in the yard and I will receive a note home.

Expectations of school:

Children expect that school will be:

- Safe
- Happy
- Suited to their learning style
- Encouraging and supportive.
- Affirming of children of all abilities
- Able to deal with bullying and supportive of victims. Lessons on bullying will be taught as part of the SPHE programme and once a month in class and outside facilitators/speakers on bullying and cyber bullying will be invited to speak with pupils.

Parents expect that there will be:

- A safe and happy environment for their child.
- Recognition and provision for the individual differences of pupils
- Support for children who need it.
- Fairness and consistency in the way children are dealt with.
- No labelling of their child.
- An atmosphere of support and inclusion rather than criticism.
- Contact at an early stage to inform them of any problems
- A willingness to listen to their viewpoint.
- Suggestions and support about problems in school.



Teachers expect that there will be:

- Mutual support and encouragement.
- Co-operation to achieve the schools aims and objectives.
- A fair and consistent implementation of the school discipline policy
- A consistent approach to handling troubled children.
- An atmosphere that encourages professional development.

Expectations of Parents:

The school expects that you will:

- Be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school and the expectation of pupils. These will be provided in the introductory pack received when your child enters Junior Infants or transfers to our school.
- Show support for teachers in their implementation of the school's behaviour policy.
- Support your child in his/her school work.
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of your child.
- Ensure he/she has the necessary materials
- Ensure your child has a positive attitude to and abides by the school and class rules. These rules can be seen in the school journal.
- Never undermine the authority of the school or teachers. Parents/guardians experiencing difficulties with the school should make an appointment with the relevant teacher/s.
- Promote respect for teachers and other school personnel.
- Give a contact number where you can be reached in an emergency. Please update your details on the Aladdin Connect app should there be any change in contact details.
- Social media/Whatsapp groups must not be used to discuss staff, parents/guardians or students of Scoil Mháirtín.
- Be available to discuss a problem.

Your child expects that you will:

- Look after his/her basic needs
- Be interested in, support, praise and encourage his/her work in school.
- Show fairness.

Other parents expect that you will:

- Support the school in implementing its code of behaviour.
- Exert firm discipline in cases where your child's behaviour is having a negative impact on the behaviour of others.



There are certain factors that influence children's behaviour that sometimes need to be considered and accommodated.

These factors include:

- Approaches to addressing educational disadvantage.
- Making adjustments for and valuing diversity; and preventing any form of discrimination (Remember some children have diagnosis that describe some aspect of their pattern of learning/behaviour. These can alert teachers to particular learning/behavioural needs).
- Relationship among teachers and pupils
- Pupils' sense of belonging to the school community
- School and classroom environment
- Classroom management
- Break-time management
- Pupil engagement
- Parental involvement

BREACH OF SCHOOL RULES

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal Teacher. Every other teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his or her classroom. They also share a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

A pupil will be referred to the Principal Teacher, for serious breaches of discipline, and for repeat incidents of minor misbehaviour.

SANCTIONS

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour both in the classroom and on the yard:

- (a) Reasoning with the pupil by members of staff;
- (b) Reprimand by members of staff (including advice on how to improve);
- (c) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others;
- (d) Loss of privileges;
- (e) Prescribing additional work – extra homework;
- (f) Communication with parents;
 - 1. A note home and a phone call depending on the behaviour;
 - 2. **After three notes home**: parents called to meet teachers;
 - 3. **Additional note home after parents' meeting**: parents called to meet principal;
- (g) Referral to the Board of Management
- (h) Exclusion from school - suspension or expulsion in accordance with Rule 130 of Rules for National Schools & Education Welfare Act 2000 (in serious circumstances)



Teachers will keep a written record of incidents of serious misbehaviour, as well as a record of improvements in behaviour of disruptive pupils. Teachers will also record any communication with and a memo of the attendance of the child's parent or guardian.

The support and co-operation of parents is essential to the effective operation of the Code of Discipline. Parents will be involved at an early stage in the disciplinary process if a problem occurs. Communications with parents will be verbal, or by email, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's misbehaviour. It is the responsibility of parents to co-operate with teachers in solving disciplinary problems.

Parents are invited to keep close contact with the school regarding anything that might affect their child's work or behaviour in school.

Suspension

Definition:

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days. During this period of suspension the pupil retains their place in the school.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The students use of a phone to take photos/videos of pupils, staff and/or visitors
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Please note that all investigations of alleged misbehaviour will be carried out in confidence, bearing in mind fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice.

NB: Fair procedures have two essential parts: the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí, who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.

Procedure for Suspension:

Procedural steps will include:

- The student and parents will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension
- Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond and be heard



- Parents will be invited to meet with the class teacher, Principal and/or Chairperson BOM to discuss the gross incident of misdemeanour or serious misdemeanour before any decision is made or any sanction is imposed
- In the case of immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- The Board of Management has delegated authority to the Principal to suspend for up to three days, which can be extended to five days with the Chairperson's approval. The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.
- Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing.
- A written statement of the terms, date of commencement and termination of a suspension will be given to parents.
- Parents will be advised of their right to appeal any decision to suspend under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998
- The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with NEWB Reporting Guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21 (4)(a))
- Formal written records, in line with the school's record keeping policy and data protection legislation, will be kept of the investigation and the decision-making process.
- The principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Re-integrating the student

- When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to class by the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and Principal.
- Should a pupil report for school even though he/she has been suspended the parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child..The pupil will not be admitted to class but will remain in another room where supervision will be arranged. The pupil will be given school work to do while they wait to be collected.



Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The decision to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for expulsion.

The following is an example of such incidents but is not exhaustive:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or staff member
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Please note that all investigations of alleged misbehaviour will be carried out in confidence, bearing in mind fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice.

NB: Fair procedures have two essential parts: the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí, who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.

Procedure for Expulsion:

Where preliminary assessment of the facts confirm serious misbehaviour, that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
- Confirmation of the decision to expel



- Prior to the expulsion of a pupil the Education Welfare Officer must be notified in writing of the school's intention twenty days in advance.
- The student and parents will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond and be heard
- Parents will be invited to meet with class teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Chairperson to discuss the gross incident of misdemeanour or serious misdemeanour before any decision is made or any sanction is imposed
- In the case of immediate expulsion, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- Formal written records, in line with the school's record keeping policy and data protection legislation, will be kept of the investigation and the decision-making process.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

NOTE: Management may add to or modify these rules if necessary.

SIGNED: Helen Leddy
Principal

DATE: 26/09/2023

SIGNED: Lizzie O'Brien
Chairperson – B.O.M.

DATE: 26/09/2023



Scoil Mháirtín Note to Home

The school rule I broke
What happened
My reasons
What could I have done differently

Student signature: _____

Teacher signature: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____