



Scoil Iosa
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Code of Behaviour

Title

Scoil Iosa Carracastle Code of Behaviour.

Introductory Statement

This policy was reviewed during the first term of the school year 2014-15 The Principal and staff were responsible for amending this policy. This was then brought to the attention of the Board of Management and also to the Parents' Association.

Rationale

It was thought necessary to review the existing policy:

- As the existing policy is due for review/amendment
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:*
 - A. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
 - B. *The measures that shall 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 in relation to a child's absence from school.*

To ensure the existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as outlined in developing a Code of Behaviour/ Guidelines for Schools-NEWB 2008

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

This policy is in keeping with the school's ethos of mutual respect, co-operation and creating a caring, safe, happy and positive environment as outlined in our aims below.

With this policy, we hope to achieve the following aims:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance, kindness towards and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Principles underpinning this policy:

- This Code of Behaviour describes clearly the school's expectations about how each member of the school community (students, staff and parents) will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning.
- The Code gives priority to promoting good Behaviour.
- The Code makes clear that the educational needs of a student, whose behaviour is unacceptable, will be balanced with the educational needs of other students in the school.
- The school Code fosters relationships of trust between students and teachers.
- The Code helps young people to experience the value of being responsible, participating members of the school community.
- The Code is informed by the principle of fairness. It respects the principles of justice and ensures a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel.
- The Code promotes equality of all members of the school community.
- The Code prevents discrimination and allows for appropriate accommodation of differences, in accordance with Equal Status legislation.
- The Code of Behaviour reflects the school's commitment to provide positive support, including active teaching of relevant skills, for those students who are more vulnerable to behaviour problems.
- The Code of Behaviour is based on a commitment to the welfare of each student, including the right to participate in, and benefit from education.
- The Code helps to promote a positive and safe classroom environment for teachers.
- The Code promotes the conditions for learning and teaching with dignity and freedom from threat of violence for both staff and students.

Content of policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings.

1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the school.
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive Behaviour:
 - Staff
 - Board of Management
 - Parents
 - Pupils
3. Positive strategies for managing Behaviour:
 - Classroom
 - Playground
 - Other areas in the school
4. Rewards and sanctions:
 - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour.
 - Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
 - Involving parents in the management of problem behaviour.
 - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
5. Suspension / Expulsion:
 - Suspension.
 - Expulsion.
 - Appeals
6. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school.
7. Reference to other policies.

1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the Code of Behaviour shall specify *“The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school”*.

The standards of behaviour that the school wishes to promote are listed below and these guidelines are based on the characteristic spirit of the school.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, and other children’s and their own belongings.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Each pupil is expected to comply with the day to day rules of the school thus ensuring a safe and positive school environment.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive Behaviour

‘A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school (Circular 20/90.)’

The whole school approach in promoting positive Behaviour includes:

- A clear policy on Behaviour and anti bullying that has been devised and discussed with the school community i.e. Pupils, Teachers, Parents and Board of Management.
- Pupils have an input in devising and reviewing day to day school rules which are stated positively and displayed throughout the school.
- Through the SPHE programme, positive behaviour is fostered and developed through nurturing self esteem.
- Positive interactions between adults within the school community are in evidence.
- Clear boundaries and everyday routines are established and familiar to all pupils.
- A climate of fairness that is evident having due regard for outside factors that can influence behaviour in school.
- Effective listening/communications skills are taught on an on-going basis.

New parents, pupils and staff members are made aware of this Code. A copy of this policy will be distributed to every parent and any new parent in the school.

There is a climate of open communication between all members of the school community and a clear Complaints Procedures Policy will play an integral part of this.

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)

Parents can support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

- Ensuring their children are at school on time.

- Attending meetings at the school if requested.
- Helping their children with homework and ensure that it is completed.
- Ensuring their children have the necessary uniform, books and materials for school.
- Familiarising themselves with this Code and discussing it in a positive manner at home.

Pupils

Pupils play an active part in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by:

- Having an input on the drafting of rules and revisiting these on a regular basis.
- Pupils are encouraged to review the Code of Behaviour and bring any issues they may have to their teachers or parent.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect and assess their own behaviour thus allowing them to become independent learners.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging Behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

Classroom

Positive classroom strategies which are used to manage Behaviour effectively:

- "Ground rules"/ Behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupil input in devising the class rules.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- A clear system whereby positive behaviour is affirmed and acknowledged and sanctions for misbehaviour are in operation.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Timetabling.
- Effective listening skills are taught from Junior Infants – 6th class.

Playground

- A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted are in operation and consistent.
- At break times pupils are supervised by the teacher on duty.
- Pupils are aware of play areas appropriate to their class. This may vary at certain times of the year depending on weather or events.
- Pupils are encouraged to play suitable playground games.
- Arrangements for wet days: playing of games in classrooms.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good Behaviour

Good Behaviour is acknowledged in the following ways:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil's homework diary.
- Points are awarded towards achieving a homework voucher.
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.
- Reference is made to it at parent/teacher meetings and in end of year reports.

Children are constantly praised and thanked for their co-operation in following the school rules.

Incidental treats are distributed at various times throughout the year.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable Behaviour

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline *'the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of Behaviour that the school has outlined'*.

'The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.'

The school employs the following strategies in responding to incidents of unacceptable Behaviour.

- Reasoning with the pupil.
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Loss of points earned towards a homework voucher.
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention during a break.
- Prescribing additional work.
- Referral to Principal Teacher.
- Communication with parent.
- Suspension (See Section 5 on Suspension).

Different levels of misbehaviour may require a variety of the above strategies.

The staff incorporate a staged approach e.g. initially misbehaviour should be dealt with by class teacher by way of warning and/or advice but, if it is more serious or persistent, the parents and Principal may be involved. The behaviour is monitored and if there is no improvement the B.O.M are made aware of the situation.

Staff makes every effort in so far as is practicable to ensure consistency in the application of sanctions.

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

'Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort.' (Circular 20/90)

Parents are informed of serious misbehaviour when it happens or if a pattern of misbehaviour is emerging. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour.

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, ...
- Members of staff are encouraged to up-skill themselves in behaviour management courses as part of their on- going professional development.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, temporary exclusion while consultation with SENO and/or EWO (Tusla) takes place about appropriate resourcing, alternative placement.etc.

5. Suspension / Expulsion procedures

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a Code of Behaviour shall specify... *'The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned'* and *"the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student."*(Sections 23(2) c, d)

Suspension

Suspension is defined as: "requiring the student to absent him/her self from the school for a specified limited period of school days "

The B.O.M. has the authority to suspend a student. (pg 70)

The principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer, by notice in writing, when *a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.* (Sections 21(4) a)

Circular 20/90 states that *'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated'*.

The school's procedure in relation to suspension and expulsion.

The following steps will be taken:

- Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.
- Pg 71 normally other interventions will have been tried before suspension and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:
- A student's behaviour has had a serious detrimental affect on the education of other students.

- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

As advised on pg 72 of guidelines the B.O.M will consider the specified factors before a decision is taken.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal in co-operation with the Chairperson of B.O.M. to exclude a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

When suspension is being considered the parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal and/or class teacher

- 1) Immediate suspension may be imposed when preliminary investigation is carried out and if:
 - i. The continued presence of the pupil would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff.
 - ii. A pupil leaves the school premises without permission from senior staff.
 - iii. A member of staff is assaulted.

In the case of immediate suspension the pupil will be supervised by the Principal/Deputy and the parents will be called to collect him/her. The parents will be given a letter explaining the reasons, duration, etc.

- 2) On returning to the school a plan will be developed to help the pupil to take responsibility to catch up on work missed. All staff will endeavour to support the pupil in settling back in and the pupil will be given the opportunity for a fresh start.
- 3) Where the Principal is proposing suspensions for longer than 3 days or proposing subsequent suspensions for the same pupil the matter will be referred to the Board of Management. The Board of Management will act in accordance with the N.E.W.B guidelines for schools.
- 4) Where a student is suspended for a cumulative total of six days or more the N.E.W.B. will be notified in writing.
- 5) Records of suspensions are kept in accordance with the 'Data Protection Act'.
- 6) Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil these may be referred to the Gardaí who have a responsibility for investigating criminal matters.

Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

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 educational welfare officer*' (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '*...such other 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))

A pupil is expelled from our school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 26 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The authority to expel a pupil rests with the Board of Management. Expulsion may happen after the school authorities have tried a series of other

interventions and believe that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour, and require serious grounds such as:

- (i) The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- (ii) The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- (iii) The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.
- (iv) There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence

Scoil Iosa is committed to following fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Educational (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:

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.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

As advised on pg 82 of the guidelines the B.O.M will consider the specified factors before a decision is taken

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

The Board of Management will act in accordance with the N.E.W.B. guidelines for school.

6. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

- The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2) (e) states that the Code of Behaviour must specify, “*The procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.*” Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence. Parents/guardians are required to send in a signed and dated note informing teachers of the reason for their child’s absence.
- These notes are recorded and the record is kept until the end of the year.

When children miss more than 20 days the N.E.W.B. is notified using the on-line system and a record is brought forward to the following year

7. References to other Policies

- o Policies that have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour
- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Enrolment
- o Record keeping
- o Health & Safety
- o Equality
- o Complaints Procedure

Success Criteria

- *Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment*
- *Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers*
- *Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils*

Roles and Responsibility

As stated in the policy. It is the duty of the all the members of the school community to ensure this policy is working. The responsibilities of each group are stated in the policy.

The Code of Behaviour and in particular the use of suspension and expulsion will be reviewed every 3 years by the Board of Management.

Ratification & Communication

This policy will be available for inspection on the school website.

This policy was ratified on _____ at a B.O.M meeting

Signed _____

Chairperson Board of Management.