

# Code of Behaviour

## Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh

### Sonraí Scoile

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Catagóir:	Gaelscoil with a Catholic ethos
Uimhreacha ar rolla:	213

Good behaviour can be learned.

The aim of this code of behaviour is to enable children to be responsible for their own behaviour from the co-operation and support of all parties involved.

### Introduction

Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh aims to help the children learn well, to develop their social skills and to develop an interest in lifelong learning. This education is provided through the medium of Irish. The child's personal development is always emphasized during his/her time in the school. The code is focused on learning and promoting good behaviour and is based on the welfare of every student, including the right to participate in and benefit from education. Working in partnership with the parents is essential to achieve a high standard of behaviour.

## Principles

- Provide clarity
- Emphasize that everyone's behaviour matters
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school
- To develop pupils self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration, tolerance and acknowledgement of differences
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- Focus on enhancing protective factors that contribute to the social and emotional growth of the children
- Recognise emotional and social educational vulnerability, take this into account and provide opportunities for learning
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support amongst students, staff and parents
- No two children are alike and therefore discretion has to be used from time to time
- To understand that relationships are fundamental to the development of empathy and co-regulation
- To help the children to mature into responsible participating citizens
- To teach and develop resilience
- To foster caring attitudes to the environment

## Our Understanding

- The family is the most fundamental element in the variables that affect behaviour
- The quality of relationships affect behaviour
- Behaviour has meaning that sometimes may be difficult to recognize
- Behaviour can be learned. This means it is possible to change it
- Behaviour takes place within a particular context and in relation to other people. Understanding the context is central to understanding the behavior.
- Teachers, other adults and other students response to a student's behavior is very important in influencing the choices a student makes about how they behave.
- Effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour

## Influences on Behaviour

- Age and the stage of development of the child
- Personality and temperament
- Personal history and experience
- Physical, sensory, medical and emotional characteristics
- Skills, ability to learn
- Beliefs about self and others
- Level-headedness
- Levels of self-esteem
- Social network including friends and peer group
- Time, opportunities and support for personal and social development
- Developing and maintaining a safe and caring environment within the school

- Relationship between teacher-child characterized by respect, trust and unconditional positive regard and positive and caring child-child relationships
- The positive support and co-operation and role modeling of the parents in the enabling of good behaviour
- The delivery of well planned lessons from the SPHE/RSE programmes

## Changing Behaviour

Parents and teachers can influence some of the factors involved in helping students to become aware of, to manage or change a pattern of behaviour.

These factors include:

- Motivation
- Goal setting
- Teaching skills
- Reminding child of previous positive results and their experience of success in changing previous unhelpful behaviour
- Support from parents, family, teacher or other adult and peer support
- Emphasis on effort
- Class reward/Merit system
- Whole-school reward system "Gradam" per term
- Develop a Behavioural Plan for children with behavioural difficulties

## Setting Standards of Behaviour

The standards of behaviour reflect these values:

- Respect for self and others
- Kindness and a willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Honesty
- Readiness to use respectful ways to resolve difficulties and conflicts
- Behaving well in class so everyone can learn
- Help to promote and maintain a positive, happy environment within the school
- Pride in the cleanliness and appearance of the school
- Respect for other people's property
- Regular and punctual attendance
- Recognise the value of and present high quality homework
- Forgiveness

## Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline, and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

## Strategies to Affirm and Support Good Behaviour

- Rules will be kept to a minimum, will emphasize positive behaviour, with due regard to the age of the pupils and individual difference
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from the children

- The standards are clear, consistent and widely understood
- "Catch them being good"
- The standards set high expectations for children's behaviour at school
- Parents support the school by encouraging good behaviour
- There is a good relationship between teachers, parents and children and a safe and caring environment is developed and maintained within the school
- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and children
- Support and implement a well-planned, consistent and integrated SPHE/RSE Curriculum to enable the children enhance their coping, resilience, communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills
- Provide opportunities for the children to create the class rules with the teacher
- The identification of children experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties
- Develop a Behavioural Plan for children with behavioural challenges
- Actively involve, support and encourage children's participation in extra-curricular activities.
- Foster a whole-school ethos that accepts and values diversity within the school
- Be aware of disadvantage and differences
- Provide access to information for teachers and parents on supports available within the wider community
- Facilitating and organizing of continuing professional development on the promotion of good behaviour for school staff and organizing relevant talks for parents and teachers on topics such as Wellbeing, Bullying, etc.
- Give prizes, responsibilities or privileges at both class level and school level - 'Gradam', 3 times a year. It is important that children know that any of them can win these prizes
- Give parents positive reports either verbally or in writing when merited

- Consistency across the teaching staff in the use of these strategies
- Target Cards focusing on desired behaviour
- Explicitly teach the skills/attributes essential for good behaviour

## **General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour**

- I speak Irish at all times in and around the school
- I attend school regularly and on time
- I am kind to myself and to others
- I behave well in class so everyone can learn
- I take responsibility for the quality of my schoolwork and my homework
- I help to create a safe, positive environment
- I show respect for others and their learning styles
- I show respect for school staff and co-operate with them
- I speak honestly and truthfully
- I take part in school activities
- I help keep the school clean for everyone and take care of the furniture
- I play nicely in the playground
- I wear the school uniform, except on designated 'no uniform' days
- I know that bullying is not acceptable
- I show respect for the property of others

## Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive and discourage inappropriate behaviour. A consistent approach to the implementation of sanctions will be applied according to the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Create a calm atmosphere as soon as possible
- Reasoning with pupil
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to conclude
- The teacher will speak with the child (children) involved. This may be done quietly or in class as appropriate.
- Withdrawal of privileges, e.g. doing jobs/messages
- The child may be separated from the group.
- Homework not completed to satisfactory standard will be completed at school/home.
- The parents may be spoken to informally
- Children may be asked to write an account of the incident
- Children may be asked to write a letter of apology/express their regret for the inappropriate behaviour
- Time out on yard (5-10 minutes)
- Behaviour management plan for pupils with particular needs
- A note may be sent home informing the parents of persistent unacceptable behaviour (billeog bán).
- The Coiste Smachta will speak with the child/children.
- The teacher will speak to the child and to the parents together if required.
- The teacher will inform the Principal.
- The child/children may be sent to another class to complete work.



- The teacher, parents and Principal will meet to discuss the unacceptable behaviour.
- If a child has 3 bhilleog bhán he/she gets a billeog bhuí which merits detention on one afternoon. If a child has 3 bhilleog bhuí they will get a billeog dhearg which involves detention on 3 afternoons
- Withdrawal from peers/temporary removal to another class to enable reflection and learning of desired behaviours
- Parents will be asked to pay if any damage is done to property.
- Formal report to the Board of Management. If serious misconduct persists a child may be suspended.

There is an increasing level of seriousness built into the above list of suitable sanctions. It would be inappropriate however to stipulate a rigid ladder of intervention, to be applied in all cases, as such an approach would not take into account the context or individual childrens circumstances.

## Problem-Solving Approach

An important element of the approach to a student's inappropriate behaviour is a problem-solving approach, in which the teacher and the school respond to the unacceptable behaviour using the following steps:

The relationship with the child must be kept very positive at all times during the process.

- 1) Gather information. Understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour. The teacher keeps a written account of unacceptable behaviour that persists and on specific incidents of serious misbehaviour.
- 2) Generate ideas about possible solutions with teachers, with children in senior classes and with parents if appropriate, that take into account the reasons why the behaviour may be happening.
- 3) Decide and agree specific strategies with the child included if possible (age-related)
- 4) Implement the agreed strategies consistently
- 5) Review progress, evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the interventions

- 6) Keep the relationship with the student as positive as possible
- 7) A ladder of intervention will operate, including levels of intervention that provide:
  - Support for all students
  - Additional support for some students
  - Specialized support for a small number of students
- 8) Follow the Behaviour Management Plan of specialized support for a small number of students

## Strategies to Help Diffuse Anger

Be observant of possible physical signs of dysregulation

Help the child towards calm

- Divert his/her attention elsewhere
- Change/take away source of the anger if possible
- Change the child's place in the class to remove them from the situation causing them anxiety/frustration
- Change of activity
- Humour but never sarcasm
- Communication - listen to the child
- Practice relaxation techniques such as tuning in to the breath and counting before acting impulsively
- Feel the anger in the body and allow it to pass/mindfulness practices
- Teach the children how to recognize and name feelings when they come up and how to respond appropriately to them in SPHE lessons
- Additional support for the small number of students who need it

## Sanctions

A sanction is a form of positive intervention. The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour to:

- Help the child to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- Help the child to recognize that his/her behaviour has an effect on others
- Prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- Keep the child or other children or adults safe
- Prepare the child for life

A sanction should be used in a respectful way that helps children understand the consequence of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

Sanctions should

- Diffuse and not escalate a situation
- Be timely
- Preserve the dignity of all parties involved
- Be applied in a fair and consistent manner

## Inappropriate Sanctions

Inappropriate sanctions include

- Physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment
- Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a child's self-confidence
- Public or private humiliation
- Applying sanctions to whole groups/whole classes in cases of individual or small group wrong doing
- Leaving a student in an unsupervised situation, e.g. a corridor

- Persistent isolation of or ignoring a child in class
- Sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way

## Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

The following procedures derive from "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" published by the National Educational Welfare Board.

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a child.

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

The decision to suspend a child requires serious grounds such as that

- The child's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The child's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The child is responsible for serious damage to property

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

### Suspension/Expulsion

Due regard will be given to the following before imposing suspension

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
2. The context of the behaviour
3. The impact of the behaviour
4. The interventions already implemented
5. Whether suspension is an appropriate response
6. The possible impact of suspension

7. Due regard to the age of the pupils, individual difference and particular needs. The suspension will be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove it for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs the school that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh has the authority to expel a child. Expulsion will be a proportionate response to a child's behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address misbehaviour before expelling a child. These include as appropriate: meeting with parents and the child to try to find ways of:

- making sure that the child understands the possible consequences of their behaviour if it should persist
- ensuring that all other options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive National Council for Special Education)

The Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a child

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

### **Procedures in respect of Suspension**

Initial consultation will be made by the Principal with the Chairperson of the Board of Management where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension. In the event that the Chairperson is not available another member of the Board of Management will be consulted. The child and their parents will be informed about the complaint by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the behaviour. They will be informed as to how the complaint will be investigated and it will be explained to them that the investigation might lead to a suspension.

Parents and the child will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. In the event of an immediate suspension where the safety of the child, other children, staff or others is compromised, parents will be contacted and asked to collect the child. A child will not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed to achieve a particular objective. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed the matter will be referred to the Board of Management. There will be a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension.

## Appeals

Parents may appeal a suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The school will provide information as to how to make an appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

## Implementing the suspension

The Principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend.

The letter will confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- A programme of work to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by the child and the parents
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, section 29)

## Expulsion

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh has the authority to expel a student.

Expulsion must be a proportionate response to the child's behaviour. Significant steps must have been taken to address the inappropriate behaviour in cases where the exclusion of a child is considered. The Board of Management will ensure that fair procedures are followed and the principles of natural justice are upheld in such cases.

Steps include:

- Meeting with the parents and child to try to find ways of changing inappropriate behaviour
- Making sure that the child is aware of the serious consequences if he/she continues the inappropriate behaviour
- Ensuring that every effort has been made to find another solution
- Seeking supports from N.E.P.S., the Health Board and N.E.W.B.

A proposal to expel a child requires serious grounds. The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for supervision however in addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that the school have tried a series of other interventions and believe that they have exhausted all possibilities at that time. The Board of Management will undertake a detailed review of a range of factors in a decision regarding the expulsion of a child, to include:

- Type and gravity of the behaviour
- Context of the behaviour
- Effects of the behaviour
- Interventions tried to date
- Consensus of opinion on expulsion
- The effect of expulsion

## Procedures in respect of expulsion

**Step 1.** Detailed investigation, following fair procedures, carried out under the direction of the Principal.

The parents will be informed in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and how it could result in expulsion. Parents will be given 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 to the Board of Management by the Principal.

**Step 3.** Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations; and the holding of a hearing.

**Step 4.** Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

**Step 5.** Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

**Step 6.** Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Should the Board of Management decide to expel a child the above steps will be followed as detailed in the National Welfare Board publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools".

## Appeals

Parents may appeal the decision to expel under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and they will be given information about how to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

## Review of the Use of Expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Refer to Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh Anti-Bullying Policy

## Attendance Policy


Refer to Gaelscoil Uí Chéadaigh Attendance Policy

## Ratification and Review

Originally ratified by the Bord of Management on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2016.

Reviewed by the Board of Management of Uí Chéadaigh on the 13/10/2022 and on the 24/11/2022.

Sínithe:



**Cathaoirleach**

**Dáta: 24/11/2022**

Sínithe:



**Príomhoide**

**Dáta: 24./11/2022**

<b>Ath-bhreithniú:</b> October 2022, November 2022
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