

**Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg,
Bóthar Rúisc,
Dún Búinne,
Co. na Mí.**

Code of Discipline

Introduction

In devising our Code of Discipline, consideration has been given to the circumstances and needs specific to our school. The aim of this Code of Discipline is to recognise the individuality of each child while ensuring, at the same time, the right of all pupils to education in an environment free from unnecessary disruption. We are all members of the school community and the Code of Discipline is designed to protect the safety, well-being and growth of all members, in this case the pupils, parents and staff of the Gaelscoil.

Our Code of Discipline is divided into 3 sections:

- 1.) General School Behaviour**
- 2.) Classroom Behaviour**
- 3.) Playground Behaviour**

1.) General School Behaviour

An Gaeilge is the language of the school. Consequently Gaeilge will be spoken at all times during school hours and at all school activities inside and outside of school hours.

- a.) School begins at 8.50a.m. Each pupil is required to be on time every day.
- b.) No pupil may leave the school during school time. A pupil may leave if collected by either a parent or a person nominated in writing by the parent.
- c.) All absences must be explained in writing to the school. This information will be made available to the Education Welfare Officer when necessary.

- d.) It is presumed and expected that each pupil will be respectful and courteous to each other, to all staff members and to any person with whom they have contact with at school.
- e.) All pupils are required to follow the instructions of their teachers or any adult in whose care they are entrusted during school time and school activities.
- f.) All pupils are expected to respect their school and school property. Any deliberate damage to the school or school property must be paid for by parents.
- g.) Each pupil is required to help keep the school and its environment clean and litter-free.
- h.) The school uniform must be worn every day, except on designated tracksuit days. The school uniform and tracksuit must be kept clean and tidy. While in uniform, pupils are ambassadors for the school and consequently should behave with the same respect towards others and towards property as expected of them while at school.
- i.) Each child is expected to walk into and out of the school buildings, through the school buildings and around the school buildings.
- j.) All pupils must walk on the right hand side of the corridor.
- k.) The same principals of good behavior apply on the school bus, on any trips out of school and while in attendance at any activity organised by the school.

2.) Classroom Behaviour

- a.) Every pupil has the right to enjoy and benefit from the school day. Consequently, good behavior is expected in the classroom.
- b.) Each pupil is expected to do his/ her own work to the best of his/ her ability.
- c.) The following will not be accepted:
 - Foul/ inappropriate language.
 - Ridicule, sarcasm or name-calling.
 - Repeated, unnecessary talking to others in the classroom.
 - Moving unnecessarily around the classroom without the teacher's permission.
 - Refusal to follow instructions.
 - Sniggering.
 - Bullying.
 - Interfering with other pupils' work.
 - Repeatedly interrupting class teaching time.

d.) The following are not allowed: -

Fizzy drinks, crisps, chocolate bars, sweets, chewing gum

- As a health promoting school, healthy food is constantly encouraged.

3.) Playground Behaviour

The guidelines for playground behavior are based on the needs of all pupils and school staff to be safe on the premises.

Consequently:

- a.) All pupils will follow the guidelines laid down by the teachers in charge.
- b.) There will be no games which involve pulling or dragging of pupils.
- c.) Each class will walk to the yard in a line led by their class teacher. Pupils will remain in line when break time is finished until collected by their class teacher.
- d.) Pupils are not allowed swing on the metal bars.
- e.) Pupils will be allowed on the pitch if the weather is suitable. The Principal or teacher on yard duty will decide.
- f.) On wet days all pupils will remain in their classrooms. They will be supervised and games and books will be made available to them. Classroom computers may not be used at this time.
- g.) Foul language, sarcasm and ridicule will not be tolerated in the playground.
- h.) Bullying of other pupils in the playground will not be tolerated.

Recording of Misdemeanours

Each teacher will keep an account of unacceptable behavior. Should there be concerns regarding behavior, parents will be informed at an early stage.

Discipline for Learning

Our children's chances of success and happiness in life depend to a large extent on their ability to make responsible choices. To foster that ability in our pupils we have developed a whole-school approach to discipline, in which all pupils are treated in a consistent manner by all teachers. In this way pupils will know precisely what is expected of them. Our scheme also builds upon a reward –centered climate that we have been cultivating for some time.

We have called our plan Smacht ar Mhaithe le Foghlaim (Discipline for Learning), the primary objective being the creation of an environment in which learning can take place for all pupils. The central concepts underpinning the scheme are:

- No child HAS to misbehave.
- When anyone does misbehave he/ she is making a choice to do so.
- Children can always choose to 'behave'.
- Pupils need to learn that good behavior results in desirable consequences.

The plan has three chief elements:

1.) Rules

Pupils are presented with a set of rules and guidelines for behavior both inside and outside the classroom.

2.) Rewards

The principal and teachers will set a reward system that they feel will be appropriate to each class level. This will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the reward system.

3.) Behaviour Checks

Pupils who choose to break a rule will have automatically chosen one of a list of consequences.

“Pupils need to learn that negative consequences are a natural outcome of misbehavior. The key is not the consequences themselves, but the inevitability that they will occur each time a rule is broken or a direction not followed. Not sometimes, not every now and then, but every single time.”

(Lee Canter, 'Assertive Discipline', 1992)

Dress Code

We ask for the cooperation of parents with our school dress code.

- The school uniform fosters a sense of belonging and pride in the school community. It is essential that pupils are neat and tidy and wear full school uniform each day, with the exception of designated sports days when the school tracksuit must be worn.
- During cold or wet weather, pupils should wear a coat or jacket to school, but this must be removed during class time.
- Hats, scarves or headgear may not be worn during class time.
- Pupils may not wear non-uniform pullovers, fleeces or jerseys during class time. An extra undergarment should be worn, if required.
- Appropriate footwear should be worn. Black or brown shoes are most suitable for daily wear. High heeled shoes/ platforms are not allowed for the child's safety.
- Hair is to be kept neat and clean and free from bright colours.

Sport Clothes

School tracksuit must be worn for P.E. class and all school related activities. A white t-shirt should be worn beneath the school tracksuit.

Toys

Toys are a distraction in school and can cause disturbance and upset if lost or broken.

It is recommended that toys are kept at home.

Computer/ electronic/ battery operated games are not permitted with the exception of the day before the beginning of the Halloween, Christmas, Easter and Summer breaks and with permission from the class teacher.

The following are not permitted at any time:

- Make- up, body piercing and jewelry other than stud earrings and watches.
- Tattoos and body transfers.
- Anti- perspirant sprays or perfumes. Roll- on deodorant in a plastic container is permitted if required.
- Chewing gum.
- Tippex
- Mobile phones. If found phones will be confiscated and kept in the Principal's office and parents will be contacted to collect it. Should you need to pass a message to your child, please do so by phoning the school secretary after 1.30 p.m.
- Mobile phones will not be required by pupils for school matches or school outings. Details regarding return time to school can be obtained by phoning the school.

Rules

1.) Gaeilge

Labhraigí Gaeilge le cách.

2.) Meas

Bígí lách agus béasach le páistí agus daoine fásta.

Léirimid meas tríd ár lámha agus ár gcosa a coimead dúinn féin timpeall na scoile i gcónaí.

3.) Gluaiseacht

Siúlaim sa phasáiste in bhur dtost agus bíodh feasach ar dhaoine ag teacht an treo eile.

4.) Cur i láthair

Caithigí bhur gcultaithe scoile ina iomláine agus bíodh bhur gcuid oibre néata.

5.) Clós

Cloigín – líne – tost.

Sanctions

Naíonáin – Rang 2	Rang 3 – Rang 6
<p>1.) Rabhadh ó bhéal.</p> <p>2.) Ainm ar an gclár bán.</p> <p>3.) Aistriú go seomra eile (10 nóiméid).</p> <p>4.) Seoladh chuig an Príomhoide.</p> <p>5.) Teagmháil le tuismitheoirí.</p> <p>6.) Leathanach iarmhairtí (Rang 2)</p>	<p>Féach ar Augisín 1.</p>

Reward System

Each child will have a grid book of nine pages (10 squares per page for Naíonáin – Rang 2, 20 squares per page for Rang 3 – Rang 6).

Book 1 – Red

Book 2 – Yellow

Book 3 – Green

1.) Pupils receive a sticker for each page filled.

2.) When three pages are completed the pupil receives a prize from the Lucky Dip box.

3.) If three more pages are completed they can return to the lucky dip box.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour.

Strategies used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems e.g.

- 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.....
- **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, what steps does the school take?**

Suspension:

The entitlement to education is protected in a range of constitution and legal provisions and in human rights Conventions. These legal protections for the individual student's right to education mean that decisions to suspend a student are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court.

The Board of Management and Principal have a duty to ensure that there are no delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension.

Great care should be taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence.

Suspension

For the purpose of this policy, suspension is defined as:

Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

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

Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality.

The right to be heard means:

- The right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
- The right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account
- The right to know how the issue will be decided
- The right to respond to the allegations

- Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body
- Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts.

The right to impartiality means:

- The right to an absence of bias in the decision-making
- The right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making

In a school, fair procedures apply to:

- The investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension
- The process of decision-making as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanction to impose.

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to suspend a student.

In Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg this authority is also delegated to the Principal.

Suspension will be implemented as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

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

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect 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.

Procedures in respect of suspension.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

- 1) Inform the student and their parents about the complaint
- 2) Give parents and student an opportunity to respond.

Parents may appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student to the Board of Management if the total period of suspension for that school year reaches twenty days. A Board of Management's decision resulting in the same scenario may be appealed to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

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 reason for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed

- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- 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

A student is expelled from school when a 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, i.e. The Education Welfare Officer will be notified in writing of the reasons for this action before expelling the student and that the expulsion may not take place until twenty days have elapsed following the receipt of notification by an education welfare officer.

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel student. In Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg this authority is not delegated to the Principal. Suspension will be implemented as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with the parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- Making sure the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Services, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal 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

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that 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.

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 might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

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

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to 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:

- 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.

It is a matter for each Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents 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 time frame 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 23/02)

- Parents/guardians are informed at the time of suspension/expulsion in writing by the principal of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion. A copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms will be kept in the school to give to the parent/guardian if subsequently requested.
- The principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Department of Education and Science.

Keeping records

Records of investigation/

Decision making.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension/expulsion.

Report to the Board of Management.

Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to NEWB

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education Welfare) Act 2000, section 21(4) (a).

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, section 23 (2) 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 should send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school. These notes are kept by the class teacher in the roll book for the school year.
- The school reports on pupil absences to the NEWB using the www.schoolsreturn.ie website.

Reference to other Policies

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g

- SPHE Plan
- Anti-bulling
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Home/School links
- Health and Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs
- Polasáí Ghaeilge
- Internet AUP

Success Criteria

The following are indicative of the success of the policy

- 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
- English will only be heard during English lessons.

Roles and Responsibility

The Board of Management will ratify this policy and will be involved in disciplinary measures when necessary.

All staff will have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy

Students should abide by the policy and parents should encourage the students to do so.