**St Joseph’s National School**

**Milltownpass**

**Co Westmeath**

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*Principal: Mrs Pauline O’Hara Acting Deputy Principal: Ms Emma Martin*

**Code of Behaviour**

**Introductory Statement**

The following policy was drawn up following consultation between Board of Management, the School’s teaching staff and representatives from the Parents’ Association.

**Rationale**

The Code of Behaviour was reviewed to ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school.

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1), that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

* The standards of behaviour to be observed by each student attending the school;
* The measures taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
* The procedures followed when a student may be suspended or expelled from the school;
* The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
* The procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.

This policy is in compliance with d*eveloping a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.*

It is hoped that this Code of Behaviour will help promote positive home school relationships through fostering social and moral education.

**Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

Milltownpass N.S is a primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath, Rev Michael Smith. Our school is committed to the following aims:

* Enabling each child to live a full life and to realise his or her full potential as a unique individual
* Enabling each child to develop socially through interacting and cooperating with others
* Preparing each child for further education, work and lifelong learning through the provision of appropriate learning opportunities
* Creating an atmosphere conducive to the development of the child based on fairness, respect and tolerance
* Fostering, developing and maintaining a positive home/school relationship

Our school seeks to provide quality learning experiences through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in a safe and happy environment.

We also seek to foster a spirit of mutual respect within our school for everyone, including those of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.

We maintain a close relationship with the parents and the local community and we encourage our pupils to participate in parish activities where appropriate.

**Aims**

* To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
* To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline respect and tolerance while recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
* To ensure the safety, happiness and wellbeing 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 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 enabling teachers teach without disruption
* To develop pupils’ self-esteem and sense of responsibility and foster respect for self and others

**Content**

The policy is addressed under the following headings.

**GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR IN THE SCHOOL**

**WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

1. Staff

2. Board of Management

3. Parents

4. Pupils

**STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOUR**

1. Classroom

2. Other areas in the school

3. Playground

4. School related activities

**REWARDS AND SANCTIONS**

1. Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

2. Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

3. Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

4. Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

**SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

1. Suspension

2. Expulsion

3. Appeals

**KEEPING RECORDS**

**ATTENDANCE**

**GUIDANCE 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”.*

Standards of behaviour should reflect values such as:

* Respect for self and willingness to help others
* Courtesy, kindness and good manners
* Fairness and forgiveness
* Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict

***[Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008 Pg 36]***

The guidelines also suggest that children should be encouraged to commit to the following:

* Attending school regularly and punctually
* Doing one’s best in class, keeping the rules and respecting staff and students
* Taking responsibility for one’s work and participating in school activities
* Helping to create a safe, positive environment

***[Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008 Pg 36 & 37]***

**Taking account of the above guidelines, the Standards of Behaviour in Milltownpass National School, Milltownpass, Co Westmeath are as follows:**

**Respect and Courtesy**

1. Each pupil is expected to behave in a responsible manner at all times.

2. Each pupil is expected to treat all other pupils, members of staff and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy at all times.

3. Each pupil is expected to be truthful and adhere to school rules at all times.

4. Each pupil is expected to respect issues of difference that may arise from time to time.

5. Each pupil is expected to be respectful of our school environment.

**Behaviour in Class**

1. Pupils are expected to abide by the rules of the classroom.

2. All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability.

3. Pupils must respect the right of others to learn in a secure and safe atmosphere.

4. Pupils must follow teachers’ instructions at all times.

5. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance and have all books, copies and materials as required.

6. Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children’s and their own belongings.

**Behaviour out of Class**

1. Pupils are encouraged to mix and play appropriately and be inclusive of their peers.

2. Any behaviour which endangers one or more children or which interferes with other pupils at play is not permitted. Continuous misbehaviour will be dealt with according to the school’s Code of Behaviour.

3. Pupils should not leave the boundaries of the playground at any time without prearranged permission or the supervising presence of a member of staff.

4. Pupils should eat their lunches in their classrooms between 12.20pm – 12.30pm each day. They will remain seated at all times when consuming their lunch.

5. All pupils will go out at break times unless inclement weather prevents outdoor activity.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the Principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s Code of Behaviour and that the Principal ‘may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child’*.*

**WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

Each member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum and applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded either on a classroom basis and/or on a whole school basis as deemed appropriate. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

1. **Staff**

*Staff as a team should have opportunities to confirm that all school policies and practices support the objectives of the code of behaviour* ***(p. 32 Guidelines)***

* The formulation, review and redrafting of the Code of Behaviour involves all teachers and relevant staff members
* Staff meetings, particularly those at the start of the new academic year, have designated times for teachers to discuss and consult on new class groupings with the previous year’s teacher as regards behaviour. These discussions may also take place during the hour allocated under the ‘Croke Park Agreement’
* All relevant reference material provided by the DES is made available in the staffroom
* Feedback on draft policy is sought from representatives of the Parents Association
* Staff discuss and agree how best classroom rules can be developed by the children themselves using lessons within curriculum areas such as SPHE, Religion and Drama.
* Due regard is given to the age of the pupils and to individual difference

The school’s SPHE curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication social and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and develop citizenship.

**Teacher’s Responsibilities**

Supporting and implementing the school’s Code of Behaviour

Assisting in creating a safe working environment for each pupil

Recognising and affirming good work

Recognising and providing for individual talents and differences among pupils

Being courteous, consistent and fair

Keeping opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum

Keeping a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour and informing Principal

Providing support for colleagues and communicating with parents where necessary

**Principal’s Responsibilities**

Promoting a positive climate within the school

Ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner

Supporting all staff members

Communicating with parents where necessary

Arranging for review of Code, as required.

**2. Board of Management**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management.

The Board should make efforts to involve the school community in devising the Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management should formally record the adoption of the Code of Behaviour, the commencement date and decisions in relation to when the Code will be reviewed.

*In our school:-*

* The BOM is familiar with the Code of Behaviour and engages in its review and redrafting
* The BOM is supportive of the Principal teacher in the application of a fair Code of Behaviour and Discipline in the School
* The BOM plays a role in fostering understanding and co-operation between teachers, parents and pupils and is supportive of the teaching staff with regard to the implementation of the Code
* The BOM encourages participation of staff in in-service programmes/days relevant to the Code of Behaviour.
* The BOM is consulted in the event of a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour
* The BOM has the right to suspend a student or delegate this authority to the Principal in cases where immediate suspension may be required.

**3. Parents**

Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential for the child’s development. If parents wish to make an appointment to meet with a teacher or the Principal at any time during the academic year they are encouraged to make an appointment through the school secretary. At Parents /Teacher meetings, behavioural matters as well as academic and socialisation issues are discussed, all being viewed as having equal importance in a child’s whole school experience. Formal Parent/Teacher meetings take place once a year, thus allowing the teachers’ sufficient time to work with children and become familiar with their strengths and weaknesses. Should a Teacher/Principal feel that matters are of a more urgent nature they may request a meeting with parents before the annual Parent/Teacher meeting

Parent Nominees on the BOM actively contribute to discussions and reviews relating to the school’s Code of Behaviour.

It is the Parents/Guardians’ responsibilities to ensure that:-

* children attend regularly and punctually
* children are supported and encouraged in their school work
* children are familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation
* children co-operate with teachers
* they as parents/guardians communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child’s progress/behaviour
* Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform.
* Be courteous towards pupils and staff
* Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/the Principal through the office
* Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
* Label pupils’ coats and other personal property
* Strictly supervise pre-school children, when in the school.

Parent Conduct

As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person’s child on the school premises

The Board will not tolerate any rude or threatening behaviour towards staff  
members. The Board of Management has a duty of care to protect their staff  
under the Health Safety & Welfare at Work Act 2005. Failure to comply with  
this request may result in an individual being asked to leave the premises  
and the Board will be informed. In serious cases the Gardaí may be called.   
Posting of slanderous comments on social media platforms about members of  
staff will also be deemed as a serious breach of the Code and may result in  
the staff member and /or Board taking legal action.

**4. Pupils**

Students are more likely to support a Code of Behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Relationships of trust between teachers and students can grow stronger through the process (p. 16 Guidelines)

* Each September the Code of Behaviour is explored through curricular areas such as SPHE, Religion and Drama, and the Principal visits individual classrooms to discuss the code with the children
* At least once a term, Code of Behaviour issues and classroom rules are discussed and reviewed when children will explore what is working well and aspects they may have suggestions on
* Pupils have a role to play in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour through

Contributing to the Code of Behaviour

Drafting rules for the classroom

**Pupils Responsibilities**

Attend school regularly and punctually

Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice

Show respect for all members of the school community

Respect all school property and the property of others

Be conscious of the safety of others at all times

Refrain from all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling

Include other pupils in games and activities

Bring correct materials/school books to school

Follow school and class rules

**STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHVIOUR**

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).

**1. Classroom**

Positive strategies which we as a staff use to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom include:

* “Golden 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
* Ensuring that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
* A clear and fair system for acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour such as stickers, praise, homework reduction and sanctions for misbehaviour such as Time out, sent to Principal, etc.
* Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation e.g. effective timetabling
* Delegation of responsibility within the classroom to promote a sense of shared ownership

**Pupil Behaviour in Class**

* Pupils must have all books and materials or equipment required.
* All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability. Written work must be presented neatly.
* Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils, a teacher or any visitor to the school is unacceptable.
* Pupils must respect the right of others to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with this right e.g. regular disruption of the class or persistent disturbance of others is unacceptable. Pupils are expected to cooperate fully with their teacher’s instructions.
* Pupils are expected to wear the correct uniform each day.

**Classification of Unacceptable Behaviour**

**Minor Unacceptable Behaviour**

* Persistent talking out of turn in class
* Leaving the seat without permission
* Homework not being done
* Littering, sending notes, deliberately wasting time
* Copying work from others
* Being inattentive during class
* Not wearing school uniform

*Strategies*

a) Reasoning with pupil

b) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)

c) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others

d) Note in homework diary

**Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

* Making rude signs or annoying gestures
* Using vulgar or bad language
* Laughing or jeering at others
* Not completing homework without a valid reason on an ongoing basis
* Entering buildings or classrooms without permission

Strategies

a) Written line to be signed by parents/note in diary

b) Sent to another class at teachers discretion

c) Loss of privileges

d) Time out during a break

e) Prescribing additional work

**Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

Bullying or threatening others

Open defiance

Making abusive, offensive, insulting or insolent remarks

Wilful damage to school buildings, furniture, books, equipment or the property of others

Fighting and telling lies or being generally aggressive

Showing disrespect to teachers

Disrupting lessons by causing distraction on an ongoing basis

Not working to the best of one’s ability

Being physical with staff or pupils

Strategies

a) Referral to Principal teacher

b) Communication with parents

c) Suspension (temporary) after consultation with B.O.M

1. **Other areas in the school**

Each classroom has its own toilet facilities. Only one child at a time is allowed out to the

toilet area during class time. The class teacher monitors the use of facilities from time to

time.

Children only circulate in the common areas of the school building when they are carrying out a

specific task / job. Where it is reasonable the children will carry out such duties in pairs

rather than individually. Pupils should behave in an orderly manner at all times and must walk when going from one area to another within the school building. Running or talking aloud, while on errands, within the school building is forbidden.

General behaviour in the School is an issue regularly addressed at assemblies or visits by the Principal to the classrooms. Staff are clear on the expectations re behaviour in the school grounds and implement the Code of Behaviour in a fair and consistent manner.

1. **Playground**

Yard Supervision is done by two teachers and two SNA’s each break time. A time table for yard duty is prepared and given to each teacher at the start of a new school term. Should a teacher be unexpectedly absent, another teacher shall cover their Yard Duty. If there is prior knowledge of a forthcoming absence, then arrangements can be made between teachers to swap scheduled sessions of yard duty. The teachers will circulate all areas of the school yard while the SNA's will concentrate on that area within which the children in their care are playing.

Children are not permitted inside the school building during play time unless they are using the toilet facilities.

Playground equipment eg hoops, balls etc must be requested from the teachers on yard duty. Children start eating their lunches at 12.20pm supervised by their class teacher.

In cases of misbehaviour on yard the teacher on Yard Duty will inform the relevant class teacher at the end of the break time. For minor incidents, the class teacher will exercise the appropriate sanctions that are in line with their Classroom Rewards and Sanctions systems under their classroom rules. For more serious incidents, a child may be removed from the yard and placed at the wall for the remainder of the break time and a note sent home or parents contacted and asked to meet the teacher/principal to discuss the incident.

* **Inclement weather:** On such days pupils remain in their classrooms for breaks. Teachers seek to ensure that standards of safety are observed and prohibit games or activities considered to be dangerous. Any directions given by teachers must be complied with.
* **Behaviour in Yard / Field**: Respect and consideration for others are paramount. Any form of verbal or physical abuse of others is unacceptable and is considered serious misbehaviour. When the field is wet all pupils play in the yard area only.
* **Accidents:** If a child is involved in any accident or hurt in any way it is reported to a teacher / adult on yard supervision. Should the injury be considered to be of a serious nature the parents / child-minder are informed and asked to bring the child home. Accidents / incidents are always recorded in the Incident Report Book.
* **Bullying and Intimidation of Others:** This is always regarded as a serious offence. All forms of threatening behaviour are unacceptable. Children must be able to attend school and go home safely without fears. If children are being bullied or threatened either verbally or physically, teachers must be told so that the matter can be dealt with effectively.

**Unacceptable Behaviour – Yard**

Piggybacks / lifting / carrying children

Leaving school grounds

Walking in flowerbeds in sensory garden (environment respect)

Remaining outside after second bell unless permission given

Throwing stones

Jumping over or standing on benches

Climbing or sitting on boundary wall

*Strategies*

d) Referral to Principal teacher

e) Communication with parents

f) Suspension (temporary) after consultation with B.O.M

**4. School related activities**

This Code of Behaviour applies to ***all school related activities***. When outside of the school grounds, but engaged in school related activities, e.g. school tours, football matches, quizzes etc, the responsibilities outlined in this document apply.

* **Before and After School**

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school do not accept responsibility for the pupils before the official opening time of 9.10 am or after the official closing time of 2.50pm for 1st to 6th class and 1.50pm for Junior and Senior Infants, except where pupils are engaged in an extra curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school Code of Behaviour during these times

* **Homework**

It is the policy of this school to assign homework on a regular basis – except weekends. Homework is an important part of a child’s learning. It links the home and school and can develop self-discipline and good study habits for the pupil. Parents are strongly advised to take an active interest in their child’s homework. If homework causes stress or worry to the child, parents are asked to talk to the teacher. T.V. and games consoles should not be permitted during the homework period. If for any reason homework cannot be completed parents are asked to talk to the teacher or forward a written note. (See also Homework Policy)

**REWARDS AND SANCTIONS**

**1. Rewards and Acknowledgement of Good Behaviour**

In considering rewards it is important to remember that students are more likely to behave well when:

* they are given responsibility and involvement in developing the school Code of Behaviour
* they understand why the Code is important and their part in making it work in a fair way
* the standards used are clear, consistent and widely understood
* parents support the school by encouraging good learning behaviour
* there are good relationships between teachers, parents and pupils and a happy school atmosphere
* adults show good example.

**(Ch. 7 Promoting Good Behaviour, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008)**

**Other strategies to encourage and promote good behaviour include**:

* positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
* good school and classroom routines and learning behaviours
* clear boundaries and rules for children
* recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
* exploring with pupils how people should treat each other
* involving pupils in the preparation of the school and classroom rules.

**Good Behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged in our school through the use of:**

* Assemblies
* Addresses made to individual classrooms by Class Teacher or Principal
* Individual classroom Reward Systems implemented by the Class Teacher that are age and class appropriate and complementary to the Class Teacher’s classroom management style: e.g.

Stickers, Homework passes

Team/Group rewards, Prizes

Weekly certificates, Progress Charts

A quiet word showing approval, comment in child’s copies

Delegating some special responsibility or privilege e.g. Viewing of a particular book or use of a specified resource, overseeing a classroom task [while supervised by teacher]

Oral, whole class acknowledgement

**Good behaviour and accomplishments are communicated to our wider school community through:**

Notes in pupil’s homework diary

Letters and circulars to parent body

Principals newsletter

Text messages

Please note that we try to ensure that rewards do not:

become the goal of learning

result in unhelpful competition

repeatedly reward the same pupils

seem unattainable to some students and, as a result, de-motivate them.

**2. Strategies for Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour**

When dealing with inappropriate behaviour Milltownpass N.S uses a problem-solving approach, involving the following steps:

1. Gathering information to understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour

2. Formulating ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening

3. Deciding agreeing and implementing specific strategies

4. Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention

5. Keeping the relationship with the pupil as positive as possible and prioritising the early involvement of parents.

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Levels of Intervention** | | | **Support for all** | Most pupils behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines. Occasional, minor misbehaviour are attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher.  e.g. Verbal reprimand | | **Additional Support for some pupils** | Some pupils need more active intervention to help them improve their behaviour:  e.g. Setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them  Referral to another teacher e.g. Principal/Resource teacher | | **Specialised Support for a small minority of students** | Working with local support services that may be able to assist in responding to the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties.  e.g. NEPS, NCSE, Gardaí, SESS, HSE Community Services | |

**Sanctions**

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about change in behaviour through:

* helping pupils to realise that their behaviour is unacceptable/inappropriate
* helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
* helping pupils to recognise and understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
* helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour
* reinforcing the boundaries as set out in the code of behaviour
* signalling to other pupils and staff that their wellbeing is valued and protected.

In serious incidents, sanctions help:

* prevent serious disruption to teaching and learning
* keep pupils and staff safe.

**Good practice in the use of sanctions**

Sanctions are used in such a way that ensures:

* They are part of a plan to change behaviour
* They are used consistently and are appropriate.

The purpose of a sanction in Milltownpass N.S is to discourage inappropriate behaviour. Sanctions are applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These include:

* Reasoning with pupil
* Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
* Removal from the group (in class)
* Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group or withdrawal of privileges
* Prescribing extra work
* Communication with Parent[s]
* Referral to Principal
* Formal report to the Board of Management
* Exclusion [Suspension or Expulsion] from the school in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000]

**Application and Communication of Sanctions - Staged Approached**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Stage*** | ***Parties Involved*** |
| *Stage 1* | Class Teacher with pupils |
| *Stage 2* | Class teacher contacts Parent, may need a meeting with teacher, parent and pupil. |
| *Stage 3* | Referral to Principal  Principal speaks to Pupil |
| *Stage 4* | Principal contacts Parents via Telephone followed by written notification followed by face to face meeting |
| *Stage 5* | Report to BOM. |

It is hoped that when inappropriate behaviour is addressed in its early stages and with parental support and positive self application on the part of the pupil, progression through the latter stages will not be necessary. However it is also important to note that should an incident of inappropriate behaviour occur that is deemed to be wholly unacceptable; progression to Step 4 may be immediate. Equally a child may be sent directly to the Principal or the Principal called to the classroom during the school day following an incident.

**3. Involving Parents in Managing Problem Behaviour**

* Where a pattern of inappropriate behaviour is observed or a single incident occurs that causes significant concern for staff, parents/guardians will be contacted.
* The class teacher or principal will make initial contact with parents to outline and discuss incident[s] that are causing concern.
* Having discussed and established proposed actions, the class teacher will continue to monitor behaviour and keep in regular contact with parents to inform them of pupils response
* Should interventions fail at this stage, the Principal will contact parents and invite them to a meeting in the school which will initially involve the Principal, the Parent[s] and the Class teacher and, where feasible, the Deputy Principal. Further interventions may be devised with input from all parties and a timeframe outlined for implementation and monitoring
* Agreement will be established at the meeting as to how best the monitoring process can be communicated to parents and when communication is to occur.
* If considered appropriate, the pupil may join the meeting so that the agreed interventions can be explained in the presence of their parents and all can be assured of a clear understanding.
* In certain cases, representatives of the BOM may be requested to attend

**{Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008, pg. 4}**

1. **Managing Aggressive or Violent Misbehaviour**

Strategies used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems include:-

* Children who are thought to be emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment (with parental consent)
* Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, etc.
* The school makes available its facilities as a meeting place for multidisciplinary teams or care teams if required
* Where appropriate Special Needs Assistants (SNA) contribute to the meetings
* Staff members are encouraged and facilitated where necessary to participate in relevant professional development courses. (Croke Park Hours)

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of others:-

* The Principal is contacted immediately
* Every reasonable effort is made to ‘make safe’ the immediate area for the pupil and all others. Where possible the pupil is removed from the immediate vicinity but remains under the supervision of a minimum of two adults, alternatively other children are removed from the area ASAP.
* Relevant external authorities such as parents, doctor are contacted immediately. Should the school be unable to contact parents, the back-up emergency contact number is used
* The Child is removed from school grounds in as safe and as sensitive a manner as is possible

**Children with special educational needs and the code of behaviour**

The enrolment policy of the school provides for equality of access and participation within the school. While some children come to school with additional supports ready in place, for others, their needs become more evident as they get older.

Every effort is made to deal with all children through the regular code of behaviour. Sometimes, however special additional measures and an individualised approach needs to be put in place to help children with SEN and to keep them and their peers are and able to access the curriculum in the school. Some children, for whom special consideration is given, will also be attending clinical and therapeutic services outside school.

Part of the successful implementation of this policy will be in building a better understanding among our school community of special educational needs, including challenging behaviour and its causes, which in turn will lead to a more successful inclusion.

‘Fairness isn’t about giving everybody the same; it’s about giving everybody what they need’.

**SUSPENSION/EXPULSION**

A proposal to exclude a child, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted only by very serious misbehaviour.”

***[Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008]***

Legal protections for an individual student’s right to education mean that decisions to suspend or expel a student are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court.

Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include their

procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour.

***Before serious sanctions such as 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***.

1. **Suspension**

**Authority to suspend**

The Board of Management of Milltownpass N.S has the authority to suspend a pupil[s]

The Principal has also been delegated the authority to suspend in instances where circumstances demand immediate action must be taken [see details below]

**Grounds for Suspension**

* Proportionate response to behaviour that is causing concern
* Pupil’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
* The pupils continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
* The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property
* One single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension, e.g: striking a teacher/SNA/pupil

**Forms of Suspension**

**Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of others.

**Automatic Suspension**

Where, following appropriate investigations, ‘Grounds for Suspension’ are present.

**Rolling Suspension**

When having returned to school from a suspended period, pupils engage in serious misbehaviour which again, after appropriate investigation, gives rise to ‘Grounds for Suspension.’

**Procedures in respect of Suspension**

At all times fair procedures will be followed when proposing to suspend a pupil.

**Informal or Unacknowledged Suspension**

Exclusion of a pupil for part of the day can be regarded as a suspension, or a sanction.

**Procedure**

1. Inform the pupil and the parent[s] about the complaint, how it will be investigated and make all parties aware that it could result in a suspension. Parents may be informed verbally and in writing or in writing alone.

2. An investigation is then carried out.

3. Parents and students are given an opportunity to respond. This will generally be done in the format of a meeting. Those present will include the Principal, the Deputy Principal, relevant Teacher, Representative of the Board of Management.

4***.*** Following investigation, should the BOM decide suspension is to be implemented; a pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

5. Written Notification will be given outlining

The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin

The reasons for the suspension

Any study programme to be followed during the course of the suspension

The arrangements for returning to school and any conditions that may be involved

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

**Procedures in relation to ‘Immediate Suspension’**

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. The Principal may impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened within a specified timeframe.

Parents will be notified immediately and arrangements made for the pupil to be collected. Should the school be unable to contact parents, the emergency contact number which they are required to give the school upon enrolment will be used.

**After Suspension Ends/Reintegration of the pupil**

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents relating to the suspension. The school will have a plan to help the pupil catch up on work they have missed. Where possible, the school will provide a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

**Clean Slate**

Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school expects the same behaviour of this pupil as all other pupils.

**Records and Reports**

Written records will be kept of:-

o The investigation

o Decision-making process

o Decision and rationale for decision

o Duration of the suspension and conditions attaching

o Where Principal has imposed the suspension, a report will be given to the BOM

o Report to NEWB if suspension is for 6 school days or more in any school year.

**2. Expulsion**

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))

**The Board of Management of Milltownpass NS has the authority to expel a pupil(s).**

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the pupil’s behaviour. Expulsion of a pupil 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 including:

* meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
* making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, should it persist
* ensuring that all other possible options have been explored
* seeking assistance of support services.

**Grounds for Expulsion**

* Pupil’s behaviour is a persistent cause of disruption to the teaching and learning of others
* The pupils continued presence in the school constitutes a significant threat to safety
* The pupil 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 exclusion is considered, the school will have tried a series of other interventions, and believe that all possibilities for changing the pupil’s behaviour have been exhausted.

**Expulsion for a First Offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. The kind 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 pupil 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**

At all times fair procedures will be followed when proposing to expel a pupil.

Where a preliminary assessment of facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps that follow will include:-

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal/Deputy Principal following where parents are informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation

2. A recommendation is sent to the BOM by the Principal/Deputy Principal

3. Consideration is given by the BOM to the Principal’s recommendation and a hearing is arranged with the Principal/Deputy Principal, parent[s], pupil and a BOM representative present

4. BOM deliberates and decides on action plan following the hearing

5. Consultations are arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

6. Confirmation of the decision to expel is circulated to all relevant parties

1. **Appeals**

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.

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)

All relevant information in relation to suspension and expulsions are available to all

parents on request from the school office.

The Principal and the Chairperson will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being

investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science. The Deputy Principal / Patron’s nominee

may be called upon here if issues of fairness are in question.

**KEEPING RECORDS**

All school records are kept in line with data protection legislation. Records are written in a factual and impartial manner.

Class teachers are responsible for keeping Parent/Teacher meeting notes. Class teachers also write up the end of year reports for each child in their care and a record sheet of their Standardised test results. Both the Parent/Teacher meeting and the End of Year Report Card allow for comments on behaviour.

Where a teacher has concerns about a child’s behaviour, a record sheet may be used to record incidents of concern and actions taken. This record sheet can be used by the teacher to ensure that accurate and appropriate information relating to their child’s behaviour is communicated to parents. Class teachers inform the school Principal that they have arranged to meet with parents and may request that the Principal be present at the meeting.

**School records**

* The Incident Book is stored in the school office
* Communication with parents are copied and retained by the class teacher when deemed appropriate
* Communication between the school Principal and parents and outside agencies are copied and retained in the school filing system as appropriate
* Board of Management matters are detailed in the Board of Management minutes book and correspondence from the BOM is copied and retained in the BOM file, both of which are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school office
* Correspondence with the NEWB is kept in the NEWB file which is stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school office

**ATTENDANCE**

**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.

Milltownpass N.S encourages school attendance through:-

Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment

Acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance

Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils

Adapting the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time

Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

**Attendance and Absences**

The doors of Milltownpass N.S open at 9.10 am and school finishes at 2.50pm. For Junior

and Senior Infants school finishes at 1.50pm and it is the parents’ responsibility to collect their

child on time. Should a person other than the parent be collecting the child, we ask that

the class teacher is notified of this.

Every encouragement should be given to pupils to attend regularly and punctually.

The Board of management is not responsible for children arriving before 9.10am or staying

after 2.50pm for insurance reasons, and parents are advised of this. Even if a teacher is

on the premises, the door will not be opened until 9.10am unless inclement weather

necessitates it.

When a pupil has to leave school early or is absent from school for part of the day, a written

note must be forwarded to the school and the child signed out from the office . A child’s absence from school must be explained in a note to the class teacher on the child’s return. Reports on the child’s absence will be made to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) according to their guidelines.

If necessary, parents will be contacted by the Principal when their child has exceeded 20

day's absence from school, informing them that this information has been passed on to

the NEWB.

If a child is collected from the school during school hours, the ‘Sign Out Book’ in the office

must be completed.

A child’s absence from school must be explained in a note to the class teacher.

Any infectious illness must be notified to the school immediately. Children should return to

school only when fully recovered. We advise that teachers administer medication only

in exceptional circumstances (See Admin. of Medicines Policy).

Pupils must have items of clothing and personal property clearly labelled and are expected to

keep the school environment clean and litter free.

**Reference to other Policies**

SPHE Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Enrolment Policy

General School information Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Homework Policy

Special Educational Needs Policy

Data Protection Policy

**Success Criteria:**

Practical indicators of the success of this policy will include:

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 Responsibilities**

All roles and Responsibilities are outlined within this policy.

**Implementation Date**

This policy will be implemented following ratification.

**Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2018 but may be reviewed earlier in the event of any relevant legal changes

**Ratification & Communication**

This policy was updated on 25th January 2017 and is available to parents on request from the office or to view on the school website.

**Reference Section**

*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*

*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998*

*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*

*Education Act, 1998*

*Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:*

*(1) Permanent exclusion from a school*

*(2) Suspension*

*(3) Refusal to enrol*

*Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website*

*Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools*

*Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes*

*'Management Board Members’ Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools*

*INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers*

*INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools*

*INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem*

*The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO*

*The Principal’s Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline*

*Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board*

*Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board*

*Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.*

*Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education*

*Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino*