

Rathlee National School

Code of Behaviour

This policy is being reviewed to ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school as outlined in our Mission Statement.

The code not only applies everywhere on the school premises but also applies at any school related activity whether on or off the premises such as school tours, swimming, sports activities, religious ceremonies etc.

Aims:

- To ensure that the personality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of all children to education in a relatively disruption free environment.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

The school wishes to promote behaviour based on the characteristic spirit of the school as outlined in our mission statement.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

When enrolling their child, the Principal will provide the parent/s with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour. As a condition of registering their child, the parents must confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by the child

Rathlee N.S. whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

"Moladh luath agus cáineadh mall" is the school motto which reflects our whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour. The code offers a framework within which positive motivators and encouragement are used by teachers. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. Every effort will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. This should help to reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.

A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents.

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour Policy. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour.

The strategies used to encourage and reward good behaviour in our school are based on "Circle Time". Each teacher uses their own positive strategies to manage behaviour in their classroom.

- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly ;
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval of behaviour/manners/politeness;
- Matching work with pupil's abilities;
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book;
- A visit to another member of staff or the Principal for commendation ;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- Rewards such as stars/no written homework;
- Teacher records improvement in the behaviour of a disruptive pupil;
 - Class 'Pupil of the Week' award.
 - Class 'Pupil of the Year' award.
 - School 'Pupil of the Year' award.
- DVD's, Golden Time, extra computer time.

As children cannot remember long lists of rules. our rules are being kept to a minimum and are to ensure the safety of all our children. (see Appendix A - School Rules)

The expectations in this policy provide clear guidelines for members of our school community and pupils as to what type of behaviour is expected of pupils and adults within our school. The Golden Rules of the Circle Time programme are on display throughout the school. These rules synopsis for the children what is expected of them, in a language they understand. Children from Junior Infants - 6th classes will be reminded of these rules and will discuss them regularly.

Be Gentle	Don't hurt anyone
Be kind and helpful	Don't hurt people's feelings
Be honest	Don't cover up the truth
Work hard	Don't waste time
Listen to people	Don't interrupt
Don't waste or damage things or take things that don't belong to you.	

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Misdemeanours:

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

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

Examples of Minor Misdemeanours:

Interrupting class work, arriving late for school, running in school building, not listening and speaking out of turn, leaving seat without permission, placing unfinished food in bins, leaving litter around school, not wearing correct uniform, being discourteous or unmannerly, not completing homework without good reason, bringing sweets and bars to school, wearing jewellery (Jewellery is not allowed except for one small stud earring in the bottom of each ear and a watch), wearing make-up, belongings not named, not bringing explanation notes for absences and incomplete homework, wearing unsuitable shoes, cycling in school grounds.

The class teacher will normally deal with classroom misdemeanours.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with Minor Misdemeanours:

- Verbal reprimand and reasoning with the pupil, including advice on how to improve, setting realistic targets.
- Time out from friends and others (to reflect on the misbehaviour).
- Loss of privileges such as 'Golden Time', Game time, extra recreation time etc.
- Note in homework journal or other to parents.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with REGULAR occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours:

- A record is kept of regular instances of misdemeanour.
- The pupil is sent to Principal.
- The child will receive detention (supervised) with written work.
- Class teacher meets with parent(s)/guardian. Details of all misbehaviour will be given to parents.

Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:

Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy), Constantly disruptive in class, telling lies, stealing/damaging or interfering with another person's property, school property/teachers' property, back answering a teacher, leaving school premises during school day without permission, using or writing unacceptable language, chewing gum, bringing glass bottles or correction fluids or any other solvents to school, deliberately injuring a fellow pupil or partaking in any activity which would put themselves or others in danger, deliberately leaving taps on, misuse of fire equipment, bringing in mobile phones without permission.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Serious Misdemeanours:

- Pupil is sent to Principal.
- Principal contacts parent/guardian.
- Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others
- The pupil will write an account of what they have done. They may receive detention (supervised) with written work. Temporary separation from peers, friends and others may also occur.
- A record is kept of all serious misdemeanours.
- Principal & Teacher requests meeting with both parents.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:

Deliberately vandalizing school property. Aggressive, insulting, threatening or violent behaviour towards any person. Bringing alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or matches to school.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Gross Misdemeanours:

- A record is kept of the incident
- Principal contacts parent/guardian immediately and parents will be called to meet the principal in the school. While waiting for the parents' presence in the school or while the discussion is taking place, the child may be removed from class and placed in another classroom with written work to do. The child writes an account of what happened and how they will behave in the future. If the parents do not attend the meeting, the pupils may be suspended and parents informed by letter.
- Suspension or expulsion may be considered

Specific strategies for children who present with behavioural difficulties arising from their special educational needs may be dealt with by having behavioural targets on their IEP or by drawing up a behavioural management plan with the parents/psychologist.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour the child may have to be isolated until the parents can come to collect the child. Appropriate support will be sought through the SENO.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is a part of our behaviour management plan to address student's behaviour when all other strategies have been exhausted. The suspension enables the school to:

- set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

The decision to suspend a pupil 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 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.**

Procedure in respect of suspension

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. Fair procedure has 2 essential parts; the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Fair procedure applies to:

The investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion

The process of decision-making as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanctions to impose.

The principles of fair procedures always apply, but the degree of formality required in implementation fair procedure will depend on the gravity of the alleged mis-behaviour and on the seriousness of the possible sanction.

The right to be heard means that a student and their parents are fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter; and that they must be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

The right to impartiality means that, where possible, the Principal arranges for another member of staff to conduct the investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case to the

Principal. Where circumstances require the Principal to conduct the investigation as well as making a finding and proposing the sanction, he or she must not only act fairly but be seen to act fairly.

The school will observe the following procedure:

Inform the student and their parents about the complaint (in writing) how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension.

Give parents and student an opportunity to respond before any sanction is imposed.

Authority to Suspend

- The Board of Management has the authority to suspend for periods of three to five days depending on the circumstances. Normally there is a ceiling of 10 days imposed on any one period of suspension.
- **Immediate Suspension:** In exceptional circumstances the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary, where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension parents must be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.

Following an investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.

If suspension is still decided upon:

- The principal will notify the parent 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.
- 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.
- The provision for appeal to the Patron
- The Parents and student should be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES (under Section 29 of the Education Act) and should be given information about how to appeal. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal/BOM written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

When the suspension is completed the student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although, a record is kept of the behaviour and sanction imposed. On his/her return, the school will expect the same behaviour from this student as of all other students.

Records and reports.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process.
- The decision and rationale for the decision.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.
- The Principal is required to report suspension in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4)(a).

EXPULSION

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

Procedures in respect of expulsion.

- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the principal
- Consideration by the BOM of the principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing.
- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- If BOM is of the opinion that the student will be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification. The NEWB will be notified using a **Notice of Intention to Expel form** which is available on www.schoolreturn.ie or from the helpline (1890 36 3666). This form will be completed and sent to **School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green St, Dublin 7.**
- Consultations arranged by the EWO.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

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

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis.. However, the Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour policy is reviewed yearly or more often if the need arises.

A copy of this policy is available to view on then the school blog at <http://rathleens.scoilnet.ie/blog/> for view by all parents. Parents are informed at the start of every school year that all policies are available for viewing here at the school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

Reviewed: November 2009
 October 2011
 June 2017
 June 8th, 2021