



Belgooly Central School, Co. Cork

Uimhir Rolla: 19672H

Code of Good Behaviour Policy

March 2012

(Reviewed & Revised July 2020, January 2023 & February 2025)

Introductory Statement

This revised Code of Behaviour Policy was formulated by the Board of Management, staff and parents of Scoil Mhuire na nGráist, Belgooly in March 2012. It was reviewed and revised in July 2020, January 2023 & February 2025.

RATIONALE

It is necessary to review a Code of Behaviour at this particular time in order to

- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
 - A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*
 - B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards*
 - C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned*
 - D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student*
 - E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school*
- 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 order to achieve our School Ethos, this Code of Behaviour is based on reward/encouraging our children to behave well, while at the same time being based on compliance and sanction.

School Ethos

Scoil Mhuire na nGrást, in partnership with pupils, parents, teachers and the wider parish community endeavours to:

- Create a happy and secure environment in which to educate each child
- Foster and develop their gifts and talents
- Enable them to grow into happy, well integrated young people respecting themselves and others

The school is committed to imparting a Christian vision of human life and human relationships in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The school is also committed to imparting a sense of our national identity, its culture and philosophy.

The school anthem also reinforces this:

How Lucky We Are!

“We want our school to be, a place for everyone,
To do some work and have some fun,
Where people feel that they belong.
We ask God’s Holy Spirit to be active here,
To make an atmosphere of Joy and Peace and Love.”

(based on Alive-O 4 Rang a do)

Aims:

The aims of this Code of Behaviour are:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our school ethos.
- To promote the safety and happiness of all children and staff in the school
- To facilitate the development and education of all the children
- To promote/encourage good behaviour among all our children
- To promote equality and fairness among all
- To enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community
- To increase the co-operation between home and school
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be available to teachers in response to negative behaviour
- Recognise that every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour

OUR CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify “*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*”.

Rather than listing all the possible misbehaviours that are unacceptable in our school, we thought it better to list clear definitions of all the differing roles and expectations of all people involved in the everyday life of the school. Where stated “The School Community” refers to *all* staff including; the principal, class and resource teachers, S.N.A.s, secretary and caretakers.

The school community expects students to:

- Help to make school a very happy place for everyone
- Attend school regularly and not miss days without good reason
- Arrive on time for class Respect all school property
- Always wear the school uniform/tracksuits on appointed days
- Show respect for yourself and others
- Avoid swearing, fighting, name calling and aggressive behaviour of any kind
- Listen to your teachers and do what they ask of you willingly
- Participate in school activities, giving it your best effort at all times
- Avoid being loud or causing disturbances in class
- Help, when possible, to keep the school tidy and litter-free

Your teacher expects students to:

- Show him/her courtesy and respect at all times
- Accept his/her authority and responsibility and his/her right to teach and impose sanctions on those who behave badly
- Come to school on time and have all the necessary materials/books
- Do your homework carefully and completely
- Listen carefully when anyone is talking to you
- Avoid distracting/disruptive behaviour
- Participate, where possible, in all class activities
- Follow the rules drawn up by your class

Your classmates expect you to:

- Allow them to be part of the group
- Speak to them with courtesy and respect
- Share equipment and resources with them
- Respect their property
- Not bully them or use aggressive/intimidating behaviour of any kind
- Show acceptance and respect their differing personalities
- Never insult or belittle them because of any perceived differences

All our students expect that Scoil Mhuire na nGrást:

- Is a happy, safe and supportive environment
- Is a place that acknowledges everyone's unique gifts, talents and learning styles
- Develops a sense of community to assist the students in developing skills, which will enable them to become independent and self-sufficient adults, who will succeed and contribute responsibly in a global community

All parents expect that Scoil Mhuire na nGrást will provide:

- A safe and happy environment for their child
- Recognition and provision for the individual differences of pupils
- Fairness and consistency in the way children are dealt with
- An atmosphere of support and inclusion rather than criticism
- Support for children who need it
- No labeling of their child
- Contact at an early stage to inform them of any problems
- A willingness to listen to their viewpoint

Parents expect one another to:

- Support the school in implementing its code of behavior
- Exert firm discipline in cases where your child's behaviour is having a negative impact on the behaviour of others

The school community expects parents to:

- Support your child in his/her school work
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of your child
- Ensure s/he has the necessary books etc.
- Give a contact number where you can be reached in an emergency
- Ensure your child has a positive attitude to and abides by the school and class rules
- Be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school and the expectations of pupils
- Show support for teachers in their implementation of the schools behaviour policy
- Never undermine the authority of the school or teachers
- Promote respect for all staff
- Be available to discuss a problem

The school community expects of itself:

- Mutual support and encouragement between and towards its members
- Co-operation to achieve the schools aims and objectives
- A fair and consistent implementation of this Code of Behaviour
- A consistent approach to handling troubled children as stated in this policy

Implementation

Every 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, positive behaviour emphasized and rules will be 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. The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. Programmes such as *SALT (Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk)*, *RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education)*, *Walk Tall, Stay Safe & Weaving Well-Being* will be used to promote positive behaviour. There will be unique opportunities for pupils and teachers to devise class rules and contracts particular to specific curricular activities e.g. drama contract. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is inclusive, engaging and motivating for the pupils. There is a balance between free play and structured activities during break times which promote the development of pupils' social skills.

Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted. In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents/guardians, every effort will be made by the Principal Teacher and school community to ensure that parents/ guardians are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents/ guardians, that the parents/ guardians are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved well also. We ask all parents/ guardians to uphold school policies and teachers decisions. Problems arising over school matters should be discussed with the class teacher initially and the Principal Teacher in a spirit of confidence and trust.

The school acknowledges that a degree of flexibility is required in respect of pupils with Special Educational Needs. The school staff share a common language and have a consistent and uniform approach to behaviour with special needs pupils. All staff has an awareness and understanding that pupils with special needs may take longer to process language when an incident occurs in the classroom or on the yard. This code of behaviour caters for children who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their individual special education needs through the use of specific strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plans/Individual Behaviour Management Plans. When the need arises, with the support, assistance and co-operation of parents/guardians, every effort will be made to secure relevant professional assessments and supports for a child presenting with challenging behaviour. In this regard, assistance will be sought from the support services within the wider community, e.g. Family G.P., C.A.M.H.S., N.E.P.S., N.C.S.E. or SHEP. However in the case of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, when the safety and duty of care to others is at issue, the school's Code of Behaviour will take precedence.

The code of behaviour applies on outings, tours and on all related activities. These activities are designed for the educational, social and recreational benefit of the pupils. However if individual pupils are deemed to be at risk to themselves or to other pupils and staff, they can, in exceptional circumstances, be refused permission to participate. In such cases, parents/guardians will be informed by the school and alternative arrangements will be made for the pupil in school.

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.

Samples of Strategies/Incentives

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment on a child's exercise book
- A visit to another class, Deputy Principal or Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps
- Awarding some special privilege e.g. Golden Time, Homework Off Vouchers
- Written or verbal communication with parent
- Sharing positive feedback in relation to school activities e.g. school tour, concert, match, City Sports etc.
- Helping pupils themselves to recognize and affirm good learning behaviour
- Adult members of the school community are mindful of modelling the behaviour that is expected from pupils
- The school community mutually support each other in fostering good relationships within the school community
- Parents can support the school by encouraging good learning & social behaviour

PROCEDURES

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

Minor Misbehaviour

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with occurrences of minor misdemeanours

- Quiet verbal reprimand / reasoning with pupil
- Reminder of school or class rules
- Seek an explanation
- 'Time Out' & 'Thinking Time' for 1 -10 minutes depending on age and the gravity of the misdemeanor
- Change position in class
- Noting instance of yard misbehaviour in 'Seomra Ciúin' copy (Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self, other pupils and staff at risk)
- Persistent recurrence of minor misdemeanour will result in child being sent to 'Time Out' in 'Seomra Ciúin'
- Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of health/safety
- Loss of minor privileges
- Communication with parent/guardian e.g. journal, phone, meeting with parent/guardian.

Serious Misbehaviour

A written note of all instances of serious misbehaviour will be kept and of all efforts at conflict resolution. Teachers will be proactive in fostering positive behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Constant bullying of others by threats, physical, emotional or verbal, violence or pressure on other pupils not to do their best. The use of any item, technological or physical, to intimidate or bully another student or staff member
- Serious challenge to authority, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or any member of the school community will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour (**NOTE:** the Board of Management has a statutory obligation to provide all staff with a safe place of work)
- Spitting
- Theft
- Wilful damage to property, school furnishings e.g. writing on walls etc.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:

- 1) The involvement of Principal/Deputy Principal
- 2) Class teacher will inform Parents/Guardians and/or meet with Parent/Guardians
- 3) Principal/Deputy Principal and class teacher meets with parents
- 4) The Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal or Deputy Principal. If an undertaking to behave in an acceptable manner is not given, temporary suspension may be imposed. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Gross Misbehaviour

The school will make every effort to refer a pupil with emotional behaviour disorders to relevant support services and will assist and co-operate with these same services.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, staff and other members of the school community the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Suspension / Expulsion

Scoil Mhuire na nGrást implements the procedures in relation to Suspension and Expulsion as laid out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*

- Ch. 10 Suspensions and expulsions: legal and procedural requirements
- Ch. 11 Suspension
- Ch. 12 Expulsion

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.

Appeals

Expulsion

Under 29(1)(a) of the Education Act 1998, as amended you have the right to appeal this decision and can do so by downloading and completing a section 29 appeal form at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/19941-appeals-against-expulsion-or-suspension-for-a-period-or-periods-totaling-not-less-than-20-school-days-in-a-school-year/#how-to-appeal-if-my-child-has-been-expelled-from-school>. Alternatively you can submit your appeal online and upload the required documentation at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>. A section 29 appeal must be made no later than 42 calendar days from the date of the confirmation to expel by the board of management.

Suspension

Under 29(1)(b) of the Education Act 1998, as amended you have the right to appeal this decision and can do so by downloading and completing a section 29 appeal form at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/19941-appeals-against-expulsion-or-suspension-for-a-period-or-periods-totaling-not-less-than-20-school-days-in-a-school-year/#how-to-appeal-if-my-child-has-been-expelled-from-school>. Alternatively you can submit your appeal online and upload the required documentation at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>. A section 29 appeal can be made where the board of management suspends a student for a period or periods totalling not less than 20 school days in a school year. The section 29 appeal must be made no later than 42 calendar days from the date of the last confirmed suspension.

Keeping records

- Teachers maintain records in relation to misbehaviour when necessary and the Principal is kept informed of all serious misbehaviour.

NOTIFICATION OF PUPIL ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

Parent(s) / guardian(s) are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child in Scoil Mhuire na nGrást by:

- Notifying the school of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence (Notifying the school office by phone)
- Sending a note to class teacher following an absence. This note should clearly state the child's full name and address, date, duration and reason for absence.

All absence notes are kept by the class teacher.

References to other policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour include:

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Health & Safety
- Attendance
- Supervision
- Substance Use

Success Criteria

Some practical indicators 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*

Roles and responsibilities

People who have particular responsibilities for this policy include:

- *Principal*
- *Class teacher*
- *Special Education Teachers/Staff*
- *Special Needs Assistants*
- *Parent(s) / guardian(s)*
- *Pupils*
- *Education Welfare Officer*
- *Board of Management*

Implementation Date

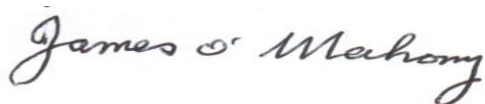
This policy will apply from February 2025.

v.18/02/2025

Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire na nGrást, Belgooly at a meeting held on Tuesday, 18 February 2025. On ratification, it will be brought to the attention of the school community and available for viewing on the school's website.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "James O'Mahony". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Mr. James O'Mahony, Chairperson BOM

18/02/2025

Date: 18 February 2025