



# SCOIL FIONNTÁIN NAOFA

## Code of Behaviour

Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe, Abbeyleix, Co.Laois

Uimhir Rolla: 17489G

### Introductory Statement

Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe's revised **Code of Behaviour** is the result of consultation and collaboration between the Board of Management, Principal, Staff, Pupils, Parents and Parents' Association (PA). This code was reviewed and redrafted in December 2021 & January 2022 in line with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools*', issued by Tusla (formerly the National Educational Welfare Board) in 2008. In drawing up the Code of Behaviour, consideration has been given to the particular needs and the circumstances of our school and our pupils.

### Rationale

- It is good practice to regularly review our Code of Behaviour to ensure we maintain our high standards of behaviour;
- 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 school. It details in Section 23(2) of the act, 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 may 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; and*
  - 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 best practice as set out in '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School*' (2008).

The principal of Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe shall, before registering a child as a pupil at the school in accordance with section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, provide the parents/guardians of such child with a copy of the Code of Behaviour in respect of the school and will 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.

### Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

We strive to promote the balanced growth with the all-round total development of every child, which includes the social, academic, moral, spiritual, physical, aesthetic and emotional elements of life. We seek to integrate Christian principles of faith and action with excellent academic programmes to satisfy the challenging demands of the modern world. We do our utmost to provide for individual

differences and needs whilst encouraging personal responsibility and cultivating self-directed, life long learning. Our school motto is '*Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí*'

### **Aims of the Code of Behaviour**

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement;
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where pupils can make progress in all aspects of their lives;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between pupils and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community;
- To assist parents/guardians 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.

### **Content of the Code of Behaviour**

**The policy is addressed under the following headings:**

#### **1.Guidelines for Behaviour in the School.**

#### **2.Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour:**

- Staff;
- Pupils;
- Parents.

#### **3.Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour:**

- Classroom;
- Playground;
- Around the School;
- School Related Activities.

#### **4.Rewards and Praise:**

- Strategies to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour;
- Approaches to Rewards and Praise.

#### **5.Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour:**

- A Problem Solving Approach;
- Sanctions;
- Classification of Misbehaviours.

#### **6. Suspension;**

- Suspension;
- Grounds for Suspension;
- Authority to Suspend;
- Forms of Suspension;
- Procedures in respect of Suspension;

- Period of Suspension;
- Implementing the Suspension;
- Appeals to Suspension;
- Grounds for Removing a Suspension;
- Records/Reports pertaining to Suspension;
- Review of the use of Suspension;

#### **7. Expulsion:**

- Expulsion;
- Authority to Expel;
- Grounds for Expulsion;
- Determining the Appropriateness of Expulsion;
- Procedures in respect of Expulsion;
- Appeals to Expulsions;
- Records/Reports pertaining to Expulsion;
- Review of the use of Expulsion;

#### **8. Notification of a Pupil's Absence from School:**

#### **9. Reference to Other Policies.**

## 1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school expects the highest standards of behaviour from all its pupils.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other pupils and teachers, staff and other adults;
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school (both internally and externally), the belongings of other pupils and of staff members;
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a daily basis (unless there is an appropriate reason for them not attending provided by parents/guardians) and to be punctual;
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and in terms of the completion of homework/online teaching experiences.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline expectations of pupils, staff and parents, each class guided by their teacher is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class. These 'rules' will reflect the age and maturity levels of the pupils in the class in question. These rules will be:

- A) kept to a minimum;
- B) written in clear, simple language;
- C) stated positively, telling pupils what to do as opposed to what not to do;
- D) based on clear rationale that is explained, understood and agreed;
- E) Developed in consultation with teachers and pupils;
- F) Communicated and referred to regularly.

## 2. Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

### Pupils

Pupils can expect to:

- learn in a safe, orderly and productive learning environment;
- be treated fairly, consistently and with respect;
- have their individual differences recognised, acknowledged and accommodated;
- feel safe, respected and secure;
- be challenged to reach their full potential;
- have positive behaviour reaffirmed;
- be kept safe from bullying behaviour;
- have misbehaviour dealt with appropriately in line with this Code of Behaviour.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly and punctually;
- wear a neat, full school uniform;
- work to the best of their ability at all times.
- respect the right of other pupils to learn;
- show respect for all members of the school community;
- respect school property, the property of others and their own belongings;
- keep the school environment clean and tidy;
- have the correct books and materials in school each day;
- follow class rules that they have negotiated/agreed;
- move quietly and carefully around the school;
- line up in an orderly manner before and after break;
- stay on the premises and within designated areas during school times;
- complete their homework to the best of their ability.
- eat healthy lunches;

- desist from using mobile phones during school hours and during school outings (unless prior permission has been given);
- avoid wearing jewellery and cosmetics;
- avoid wearing piercings with the exception of small ear studs;
- abide by our Acceptable Use Policy for ICT and the guidelines therein;
- avoid using obscene/vulgar language;
- enter and exit the school building in an orderly fashion;
- refrain from cycling and 'scooting' within the school grounds.

## **Staff**

Staff can expect to:

- be treated with respect;
- teach/work in a well maintained physical environment relatively free from disruption;
- get support and co-operation from colleagues, pupils and parents in order to achieve the school's aims and objectives;
- be listened to and participate in decision making which affects their own work and that of the school in general;
- work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development;
- get support and professional advice from the Board of Management and school leadership team;
- have grievances dealt with according to agreed procedures as set out in relevant grievance procedures.

Staff are expected to:

- support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour;
- be cognisant of their duty of care;
- display high levels of professionalism at all times;
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for pupils;
- develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil;
- praise desirable behaviour;
- enable pupils to reach their full potential in different domains of their lives;
- recognise and provide for individual differences as far as is reasonable and practicable;
- be courteous, consistent and fair;
- keep opportunities for disruption to a minimum;
- keep records of serious misbehaviour;
- provide support for colleagues;
- maintain positive working relationships with parents/guardians in the best interests of the pupils;
- communicate behavioural issues to parents in an appropriate manner;
- discuss behavioural issues pertaining to pupils in a respectful manner.

## **Parents**

Parents can expect to:

- be treated with respect by school personnel;
- have a safe and welcoming learning environment for their child;
- obtain recognition for individual differences that their child may have, having due regard for the resources and supports that are available in the school;

- have fair and consistent procedures applied to/in the school's dealings with their child;
- receive progress reports about their child in accordance with agreed school policy (Parent Teacher Consultations and End of Year Reports);
- receive information on where school's policies and procedures can be accessed.
- find the school a welcoming place.

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time and that they are collected from school on time;
- drop their child to school at/from a specified time onwards (only);
- encourage their child to follow the school's Code of Behaviour at all times;
- ensure their child wears the correct school uniform;
- ensure their child has the correct books and materials required for school each day;
- ensure that their child has an adequate healthy lunch each day;
- have their child's belongings labelled;
- replace any belongings i.e stationery that are broken or used;
- read all written communication received from the school and respond appropriately (if required);
- ensure that the school has up to date contact details for them;
- treat all members of the school community with respect;
- provide an explanation i.e letter, call, email etc. for all/any absences;
- inform class teacher(s) of any change to collection procedures for their child;
- help their child to learn and practise good behaviour and to have a positive attitude towards themselves, other people and towards the school in general;
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others;
- communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour;
- attend meetings at the school if requested;
- assist their child with their homework and ensure it is completed to the best of their ability;
- co-operate with our set down and parking policies in the interests of the safety, health and welfare of all members of our school community;
- walk to the wall/school side of the road when collecting their child from the infant classes from school and accompany them to the car;
- keep younger and Junior and Senior Infant children in the car at the dismissal time of pupils from 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class at 3:00p.m unless they are held by the hand by an adult, at all times.

### **3. Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour**

#### **Classroom**

- Courtesy and consideration of others is the basis of behaviour in the classroom. Pupils must respect the right of others to work and learn without undue interruption;
- Pupils will co-operate with teachers and SNAs and participate fully with all aspects of class/school work;
- Pupils will respect the property of other children and staff members;
- Pupils will respect school property;
- Pupils must ensure that they bring to school everything necessary for their day's work;
- It is the responsibility of each individual pupil to take care of his/her own property;

- Pupils must ensure that their desks and the areas they occupy are kept (and left) clean and tidy;
- Toilet areas must be kept clean and tidy.

## **Playground**

### **Behaviours that are not allowed in the playground:**

- Rough play (fighting games, pulling jumpers, dragging pupils to the ground);
- Charging recklessly;
- Jeering, spoiling, bullying, name calling, taunting, taking items of clothing etc;
- Leaving the schoolgrounds without permission;
- Kicking or throwing balls or other equipment at people;
- Any form of anti-social behaviour;
- Any form of dangerous activity;
- Any form of bullying or racism.

In the event of misbehaviour in the playground

- 1) Pupils may be sent to the 'cooling off' areas;
- 2) Pupils who continuously misbehave in the yard may be removed from the yard for a period of time. This removal will be to a supervised, designated work area or to a supervised lunchtime group. Parents/guardians will be informed of this continuous misbehaviour and how long their child is being withdrawn from the yard for.

Yard Rules will be discussed by the class teachers at least once a term;

The Principal will visit each class periodically to reinforce yard rules and discuss yard issues (if applicable) with the pupils.

## **Behaviour Around the School**

- 1) Pupils are expected to treat all school property with respect;
- 2) Pupils are expected to walk between classes and between classrooms and to the yard/field;
- 3) Pupils are expected to speak in a low voice when they enter the school building;
- 4) Pupils should walk in the corridors at all times;
- 5) All games/activities should stop when the bell rings in the yard/or when the teacher on yard duty provides a signal to stop;
- 6) Pupils line up in single file and enter the school building in an orderly fashion.

## **Behaviour on School Related Activities**

- 1) All school related activities, irrespective of time or place, are seen to be extensions of school life and the school day and the same rules that apply to behaviour in school, apply equally to behaviour out of school i.e on any trips/excursions/to sporting events etc;
- 2) Pupils are expected to behave in a mannerly, respectful and safe way when taking part in any school related activity and to follow the directions of teachers, SNAs, staff and other adult personnel or parents who are assisting the teachers;
- 3) Pupils who misbehave at a school related activity may be banned from participation in future such activities;
- 4) Pupils are expected to treat all guides, sports trainers/coaches, library and theatre personnel, bus drivers, swimming pool staff, referees, opposing teams and mentors, etc. with respect and courtesy at all times and to follow any instructions or guidance given.
- 5) Pupils are expected to walk row by row and in ones or twos as directed, under the

guidance of teachers and SNAs when off site;

- 6) Pupils must always walk in a safe and orderly fashion taking account of traffic, crossing points, other pedestrians and the general rules of the road when off site;
- 7) Pupils must never cross a road until directed to do so by a teacher;
- 8) Pupils must never interfere with property they pass on a walk or a visit (doors, bins, cars, signs, etc.);
- 9) Pupils must never run ahead of the group or lag behind the group when doing a (group) walk/when offsite etc.

## 4. Rewards and Praise

### Strategies to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour:

- Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our code;
- All staff actively support our school ethos which emphasises and is underpinned by trust, respect, integrity, care and individual personal responsibility;
- Positive relationships between teachers, parents and pupils are promoted and affirmed;
- Teachers and staff model the behaviour that is expected from pupils;
- Good school and class routines are in operation. Core routines necessary for the smooth implementation of classroom learning are clearly established – e.g. entry to the classroom, settling for (whole) class teaching, appropriate seat planning, transition time routines, how to appropriately get teachers attention, engagement levels and noise level for pair/group work activities etc. This list is not exhaustive.
- Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules/a charter in discussion and collaboration with the pupils (as aforementioned);
- Teachers use a classroom management plan to promote positive behaviour. This includes the class rules/charter as aforementioned, the agreed reward system (if applicable) and the consequences that apply when a pupil fails to adhere to the class rules;
- Parents/Guardians are welcome in our school and staff consult with them where/when necessary;
- Teachers ensure that the class timetable is as varied as possible and presents a balanced and interesting educational programme for all pupils;
- Pupils are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur clear, fair and consistent consequences;
- Social Health and Physical Education (SPHE) is used as a context within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem, respect and care for others.

### Approaches to Rewards and Praise:

Our school places greater emphasis on praise and rewards than on sanctions, in the belief that this will in the long-term lead to optimal desired behaviour. Essentially, desired behaviour that is praised and/or rewarded is likely to be repeated. Our approach to rewards and praise includes the following:

- A quiet word of praise or gesture to show approval;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- A visit to the Principal for praise/acknowledgement;
- Informing parent/guardian: this could include a note in the pupil's homework journal, a text message (via Aladdin), an email etc.
- Points or stars etc. may be awarded to individuals/groups/classes for good/desirable behaviour and good effort with school work as part of a class reward system;



- Special Class treats – ‘*Golden Time*’, raffle, Homework passes;
- Awarding some special responsibility or privilege e.g. leader for the day, specific classroom job/role;
- Certificates/awards may be given for good behaviour, good effort and good academic progress i.e ‘*Student of the Week*’, ‘*Gaelgeoir na Seachtaine*’; etc.

## 5. Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour/Sanctions

### A Problem Solving Approach:

An important element of the approach to a pupils’ inappropriate behaviour is a problem-solving approach: that is, one where the teacher and the school respond to the unwanted behaviour using these steps:

- 1) Gather information. Understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour;
- 2) Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening;
- 3) Decide and agree on specific strategies;
- 4) Implement the agreed strategy consistently;
- 5) Review progress: evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention;
- 6) Throughout, keep the relationship with the pupil as positive as possible; involve the pupil and parent;

In certain instances, inappropriate behaviour may be addressed within the context of the school’s Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy and the Continuum of Support. This will be a matter of professional judgement for school management, classroom teachers and Special Education Teachers (SET) in consultation with parents/guardians. In this regard, the guidelines for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education will be referred to and utilised.

### Sanctions:

The Board of Management of Scoil Fionntáin Naofa will promote a whole school approach to the use of sanctions which will include

- clarity about the role and purpose of sanctions;
- good practice in the use of sanctions;
- the school’s duty of care;
- supports for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

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

- helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable;
- helping pupils to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others;
- helping pupils (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to 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.

Good practice in the use of sanctions includes

- regarding sanctions as a component part of a plan to change behaviour;
- sanctions being used consistently;
- pupils and parents/guardians know what sanctions are used in the school;
- sanctions are proportionate;
- sanctions are appropriate.

The following sanctions will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour (not in any particular order/sequence):

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Appropriate verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Temporary supervised removal from group (within the class or on the yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parents/guardians;
- Text message being sent to parents/guardians via Aladdin;
- Email being sent to parents/guardians;
- Verbal communication i.e conversation, telephone call or meeting with parent/guardian:
- Carrying out a useful task within the school;
- Reflection sheet (kept on file by teacher);
- Extra homework;
- Referral to another teacher/classroom for a period of time;
- Referral to Principal;
- Supervision during lunch breaks in a designated area;
- Withdrawal of privileges, responsibilities or extra duties;
- Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal;
- Formal written communication with parents/guardians as/when necessary;
- Formal prearranged meeting with parents/guardians;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion.

Sanctions are applied so that pupils will learn from their behaviours based on the principle that for every action there is a related consequence. Desirable behaviours, attitudes and conduct are taught through the medium of discrete lessons from the SPHE curriculum i.e the '*Walk Tall*' programme. Appropriate, desirable and respectful behaviours will be modelled by the staff in the school on a daily basis.

### **Classification of Misbehaviours**

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories namely

- 1) Minor;
- 2) Serious;
- 3) Gross.

Teachers and/or the Principal will make professional judgements using a common sense approach, giving due regard to the age, maturity and emotional development of the pupil and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as a means of determining what category of misbehaviour it falls into.

### **Minor Misbehaviour**

The following are examples of possible minor misbehaviour;

- Interrupting class work;
- Running in the school building;
- Littering around the school;
- Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note/email from a parent/guardian);
- Talking out of turn.

This list is not exhaustive.

**Teachers will deal with instances of minor misbehaviour using the following approaches:**

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Appropriate verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or on the yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent/guardian;
- Email/text message via Aladdin to parent/guardian;
- Carrying out a useful task within the school;
- Reflection sheet (kept on file by teacher);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians

This list is not exhaustive.

**Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with using the following approaches:**

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)
- Referral to the Principal;
- Meeting with parents/guardians about misbehaviour.

**Serious Misbehaviour**

The following are examples of possible serious misbehaviour:

- Being constantly disruptive in class;
- Stealing;
- Damaging others' property;
- Bullying;
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard;
- Using unacceptable or obscene language;
- Deliberate, continual disobedience;
- Discourteous or unmannerly behaviour;
- Leaving the school premises without permission.

This list is not exhaustive.

**Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with using the following approaches:**

- Pupil will be sent to the Principal;
- A letter/email will be sent from the school Principal informing parent/guardian of serious misbehaviour;
- The class teacher and Principal will meet with one/both parents/guardians;
- Suspension in certain instances (refer to Section 6 below on 'Suspension')

**Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:**

- Suspension of the pupil from the school. (Please refer to the section below on 'Suspension')

**Gross Misbehaviour:**

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Bringing weapons, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or dangerous substances to school;

- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate;
- Deliberately injuring any member of the school community;
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; ( e.g. physical violence, striking, kicking, biting, spitting).
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.
- Sexual assault.

**Teachers will take the following step when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour:**

- The Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension may be sanctioned:
- Any such instances of Gross Misbehaviour may result in immediate suspension in accord with procedures set out in this Code of Behaviour

## 6.Suspension

**Suspension:**

- Suspension is defined as *‘requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’* (*‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools’* p. 70);
- Suspension will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with parents/guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.
- Before serious sanctions such as suspension are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be followed;
- Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the pupil’s behaviour. The suspension should:
  - 1)enable the school to set behavioural goals with the pupils and their parents/guardians;
  - 2)give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions;
  - 3)impress on a pupil and their guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.
- Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviour, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes.

**Grounds for Suspension:**

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as:

- the pupil’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils;
- the pupil’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety;
- the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

Please note that a single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension of a pupil.

**Authority to Suspend:**

- The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil (*‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools’* p. 70)
- The Principal of the school will contact and liaise with the Chairperson of the Board of Management and in certain instances the Board of Management itself before making a decision to suspend a pupil from the school.

## **Forms of Suspension**

1) 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 other pupils or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures will be applied.

2) Automatic' Suspension: The Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the principal, parents, teachers and pupils, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

3) Rolling Suspension: A pupil will not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:

- they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and
- fair procedures are observed in full
- and the standards applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil;

4) Informal or Unacknowledged Expulsion: Exclusion of a pupil for part of the school day, as a sanction, unacknowledged or asking parents/guardians to keep a child from school, as a sanction, is a suspension. Any exclusion imposed by the school is a suspension, and will follow the Guidelines relating to suspension.

## **Procedures in Respect of Suspension:**

- The Board of Management of Scoil Fionntáin Naofa will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil;
- Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:
  - 1) inform the pupil and their parents/guardians about the complaint/issue;
  - 2) give the pupils and their parents/guardians an opportunity to respond.

## **Period of Suspension:**

- A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective;
- If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, outlining the circumstances and the expected outcomes;
- The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

## **Implementing the Suspension:**

- Written notification: The Principal will notify the parents/guardians of the pupil in question in writing of the decision to suspend;
- The letter will confirm:
  - 1) the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end;
  - 2) the reasons for the suspension;
  - 3) any study programme to be followed;

- 4) the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupils and the parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the school's Code of Behaviour);
- 5) the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management of the school;
- 6) the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **Appeals to Suspensions:**

- Where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007;
- At the time when parents/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to appeal.

### **Grounds for Removing a Suspension:**

- A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **Records/Reports pertaining to Suspension:**

Records of investigation and 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.

Report to the Board of Management:

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

Report to Tusla

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

These records and reports will be stored and retained in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

### **Review of the use of Suspension:**

The Board of Management of Scoil Fionntáin Naofa will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

## 7. Expulsion

### Expulsion:

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

### Authority to Expel:

- The Board of Management of a school has the authority to expel a student (*‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools’* p. 80).

### Grounds for Expulsion:

- Expulsion will always be a proportionate response to behaviour of a pupil. It will only be used as a last resort when all other approaches/options have been tried;
- 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:
  - A) meeting with parents/guardians and the pupil try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour;
  - B) making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist;
  - C) ensuring that all other possible options have been tried;
  - D) seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, 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:

- A) the pupil’s behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process;
- B) the pupil’s continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- C) the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

### ‘Automatic’ expulsion

- The Board of Management may decide, as part of the school’s policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and pupils, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction;
- However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours will not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

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

- A) a serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff;
- B) actual violence or physical assault;
- C) supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school;
- D) sexual assault.

### **Determining the Appropriateness of Expulsion**

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a pupil (Refer to p. 82 of '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' and the guidance document '*Factors to Considered Before Proposing to Expel a Student*').

### **Procedures in respect of Expulsion:**

- Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe is 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 in Tusla
  - 6) Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Steps pertaining to Expulsion as outlined above

#### Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal:

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- inform the pupil and their parents/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion;
- give parents/guardians and the pupil every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation. This also ensures that parents/guardians are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents/guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

- Parents/guardians and the pupil will have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed;
- Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the pupil and their parents/guardians will be held as it provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the pupil's behaviour;
- If a pupil and their parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour;
- The school will record the invitation issued to parents/guardians and their response.



### Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- inform the parents/guardians and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion;
- ensure that parents/guardians have records of:
  - A) the allegations against the student;
  - B) the investigation;
  - C) written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.

The Principal will provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents (as outlined above) and also

- notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing;
- advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management;
- ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

### Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing:

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board of Management will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the pupil).

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing:

- The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the principal and the parents/guardians will put their case to the Board in each other's presence;
- Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction.
- Parents/guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board of Management will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.
- After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the principal and parents/guardians are not present for the Board's deliberations.

### Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board of Management to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction;
- Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in Tusla in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The pupil cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1));

- The Board of Management will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process;
- Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Education Welfare Officer.

#### Step 5: Consultations arranged by Tusla/Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents/guardians and the pupil, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

#### Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

- Where the twenty-day period following notification to Educational Welfare Officer in Tusla has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the pupil should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.
- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.
- A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

### **Appeals to Expulsions:**

Parents/guardians will be told about the right to appeal an expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

### **Records/Reports pertaining to Expulsion:**

Formal written records/report will be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held);
- the decision-making process;
- the decision and the rationale for the decision;

These records and reports will be stored and retained in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

### **Review of the Use of Expulsion:**

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

## **8. Notification of a Pupil's Absence from School:**

Parents/guardians must notify the school of all absences of their child in line with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act section 23(2) and section 18.

Parents/guardians should:

- Notify their child's class teacher of the absence via email on the first day of their child's absence. They should provide a brief reason for and description of the absence. This allows teachers to categorise the absence under the correct heading i.e Illness/Urgent Family Reasons/Holiday/Suspended/Other as required on the electronic roll system.

- If any absence isn't explained to the class teacher/school, the absence will be recorded as '*Unexplained*'.

## 9. Reference to Other Policies

- Child Safeguarding & Risk Assessment;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Acceptable Use Policy for ICT;
- Safety, Health & Welfare Statement & Risk Assessment;
- Admissions Policy;
- Parental Complaints Procedure;
- Substance Use Policy;
- Data Protection Policy.

### Success Criteria

The following is the success criteria for/of this Code of Behaviour:

- Observation of positive/desirable behaviour as set out in the code in classrooms, playground and the general school environment;
- Practices and procedures as outlined in this policy being implemented fairly and consistently;
- Positive feedback on the implementation of the Code from different stakeholder groups.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Board of Management

The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management are to:

- Provide a comfortable & safe environment for all;
- Ensure that a Code of Behaviour is prepared in the school;
- Ensure that all members of the school community have the opportunity to be involved in work on the Code of Behaviour;
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is relevant and applied consistently;
- Ratify the Code of Behaviour;
- Support the Principal and Staff in the implementation of the code;

#### Principal

The roles and responsibilities of the Principal are to:

- Promote a positive climate in the school;
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner and arrange for review of the Code, as required;
- Support staff in the implementation of the code;

#### Staff

The roles and responsibilities of staff are to:

- Promote a positive climate in the school;

- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

Please see expectations of staff, pupils and parents also as outlined in section 2 of the code above namely a '*Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour*'.

#### Implementation Date

This policy will apply from the date of ratification namely 17 January 2022.

#### Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and, if necessary amended if it is deemed appropriate to do so as a result of consideration of any of the success criteria or in line with updated legislation/guidelines in this domain. A formal review of the policy will take place in January 2024.

#### Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified the policy at its meeting on 17 January 2022.

Micéal Delaney

Chairperson of the Board of Management

17 January 2022

Date

A copy of this Code of Behaviour will be made available on the school's website and can also be obtained from the Principal.

