

Scoil Cholmcille



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Introductory Statement

The staff of Scoil Cholmcille came together to audit our current code and make alterations as necessary.

Rationale

It was necessary to review the Code of Behaviour at this particular time for the following reasons.

- 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 behavior in respect of the pupils registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2) that the code of behavior shall specify:
 - A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
 - B. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
 - C. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
 - D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil; 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 good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behavior: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

In Scoil Cholmcille we aim to allow children to develop positive self esteem, self discipline and feel secure and make progress on all aspects of their development. Through our code of behavior we hope to foster this. Through work between staff, parents and children we hope to foster a sense of community and co-operation towards promoting positive behavior. In devising the code, consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of Scoil Cholmcille. Scoil Cholmcille seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behavior of everyone in the school. The behavior of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behavior required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Aims

Arising from the Code of Behaviour we aim to achieve the following:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.

Scoil Cholmcille

- To promote positive behavior and self-discipline, recognizing the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well being 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 to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions is implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behavior are expected, explained, understood and supported.
- To help create a positive learning environment in which all pupils can benefit from the education system and achieve their personal best.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community as well as caring for the school and its environment.
- To encourage consistency of response in both positive and negative behaviour.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

Principals Underling Our Code

- Every effort will be made to ensure that our code is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner and that all members of staff adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
- Differences amongst our pupils e.g. S.E.N. pupils will be acknowledged.
- A whole school approach will be adopted. This requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation and sense of ownership from all the stake holders – B.O.M., teachers, parents, pupils and ancillary staff.
- Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.
- Content of Policy

1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the school.

2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

- Staff
- Board of Management
- Parents
- Pupils

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

- Classroom
- Playground
- General school.
- School related activities.

4. Rewards and sanctions

- Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour.
- Strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- Involving parents in management of problem behaviours.
- Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour.

Scoil Cholmcille

5. Suspension/Expulsion

- Suspension
- Expulsion

6. Keeping records

7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school.

8. Reference to other policies.

1. Guidelines for behavior 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 pupil attending the school”.

The following are agreed standards of behaviour that we strive towards:

- 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 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.

The school recognizes there may be external factors influencing children's behaviour that may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated. The school may need to take into account Individual Behaviour Programmes with regard to the individual needs of a child/children.

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 behavior so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable effort to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

2. Whole School approach in promoting positive behaviour.

The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony.
- A teamwork approach to behavior.
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management.
- An inclusive and involved school community.
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behavior policy.

We advocate a whole school approach to the promotion of positive behavior in the following manner:

Scoil Cholmcille

Staff

All staff participated in the review of our document.

Staff promote positive behaviour through a variety of strategies.

Newly appointed teachers are informed of our code and procedures to promote positive behaviour.

Staff discuss behaviour at staff meetings and on planning days as necessary.

Appropriate work is provided for pupils to promote a work ethos.

SPHE programme is used to help us promote positive behaviour. Programmes such as Walk Tall and Be Safe support the programme. The RE Alive O Programme also supports positive behaviour.

Class teacher discusses class rules with children at the beginning of each year/term.

Teachers support children with SEN in interpreting the code and help them to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies.

The Board will play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the schools ethos and responsibilities;

- The staff of Scoil Cholmcille worked together to review and update our plan.
- The principal and staff presented their work to the BOM at a meeting. The work was discussed and ratified.
- The BOM support the Code of Behaviour and the staff with its implementation.
- The BOM provide opportunities for the staff to obtain training to support the code where necessary.
- The BOM works with the staff and principal to deal with serious breaches of the code of behavior.

Parents

Parents are given a booklet containing the Code of Behaviour on enrolment and made aware of any subsequent amendments.

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behavior in the following ways:

- parents ensure their children attend school regularly (as per the school calendar year) and punctually
- parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- parents are aware of and co-operate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- parents attend meetings at the school if requested
- parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.

Pupils

Pupils are involved in promoting the Code of Behaviour in the following ways;

Scoil Cholmcille

- Teachers work with children in discussing school rules and setting class rules.
- Children take part in assemblies. Assemblies can be used to promote positive behaviour and communicate school rules.
- SPHE is used to teach the code.
- The school promotes a non bullying environment and children adhere to this as outlined in our Anti-bullying policy.
- Children will co-operate with the Code of Behaviour fully as parents and teachers work together to implement the code.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behavior is to prevent it occurring in the first place. We therefore have clear expectations with regard to behaviour within the classroom, playground and school in general as outlined below.

Strategies to prevent escalation of misbehavior

- A non-verbal signal such as a look or a frown
- Change in tone of voice
- Stop speaking and wait for attention.
- Overlook or ignore the undesirable behavior
- Move the child to another seat.
- Speak to the child, remind the child of the rule which is being broken and encourage him/her to keep the rule. Circle time/SPHE classes are used to discuss behaviour and to promote positive behaviour.

For children with special needs

- Reward strategies, which are constantly reviewed and updated.
- Constant communication with parents.
- Structured play involving special needs assistant.
- All of this documented in the children's I.E.P.s
- The schools Social, Personal and Health Education (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. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

Classroom Rules

1. Children remain in their seats unless otherwise directed and do not leave the classroom without permission.
2. Children greet visitors to the classroom in the appropriate manner and continue working quietly, especially if the teacher is called to the door by a visitor/parent.
3. Children keep desks tidy and respect classroom furniture and walls by not writing on or damaging them.
4. Children show respect for their own and other people's belongings by not taking them without permission.
5. No running. Always walk in the classrooms.
6. Use appropriate bins for recycling, compost/litter.
7. Listen to messages given and do as requested, following directions.
8. Show respect for themselves and others by being honest and truthful at all times.

Scoil Cholmcille

9. Participate to the best of their ability in all class activities.

Playground Rules

1. Exit classroom by walking to playground.
2. No rough play i.e. running into others etc.
3. No name calling.
4. All litter to be taken back in at end of breaks and disposed in appropriate bins in the classroom.
5. Report any incidents/concerns to the teacher on duty.
6. Children not allowed to enter the school during breaks without permission from teachers on duty unless to go to the toilet.
7. No hot drinks allowed in the playground.
8. No toys/or games allowed in the playground unless with teacher permission.
9. Children line up in an orderly manner at the end of break.

General School Rules

1. When children are leaving the school to partake in school activities they follow the teacher to the bus.
2. No chewing gum allowed.
3. Use of bad language is not allowed.
4. Children will respect school property but if intentionally damaged or defaced parents will be asked to remunerate the school.
5. Children are not allowed to leave the school premises without permission.
6. Children wear the school uniform unless directed by school staff.
7. Children participate in all school activities unless otherwise directed by parents/guardians.
8. Children show all staff members/visitors to the school courtesy and respect at all times.
9. Children are discouraged from taking mobile phones to school. If this occurs they are given to the class teacher in the morning and it is the child's responsibility to collect it at the end of the day.

The above rules may vary slightly from time to time depending on circumstances and as the need arises.

School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school i.e. school tours, extra-curricular activities etc. Parents, SNAs, Coaches etc. are asked to abide by the Code when helping out in the school/or school related activities.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Good behaviour is acknowledged in the following way;

- Praise
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book.
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- A word of acknowledgement in front of a group or class.

Scoil Cholmcille

- A system of merit marks – stickers, prizes, free homework pass, privilege time: DVD/Sport.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour

The strategies used in response to incidents of inappropriate behaviour may include the following:

- Verbal reprimand.
- Removal from the group (in class).
- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group.
- Carrying out a useful task in the school.
- Change seating position in classroom.
- Reasoning with pupils.
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Communication with Parents.
- Temporary separation from peers.
- Referral to Principal/Deputy-Principal.
- Reminder of classroom/school rules.
- Note to parents.
- Take note of.
- Write out/reflectionary/explanation of incident.
- Pupils who misbehave frequently may not be allowed to participate in school outings/extra curricular activities for their own safety and that of other pupils.
- Formal report to the Board of Management.
- Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88).

Procedures:

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.

The aim is to change the behaviour and allow the child to take responsibility for their actions. The teacher (and sometimes the teacher together with the principal) will investigate incidents of inappropriate behaviour and the teacher (and sometimes the teacher with the principal) will decide on the appropriate sanction (as outlined above) depending on the nature of the misbehaviour.

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

- The staff will contact parents where there is concern about a child's behaviour.
- Parents are also consulted when various strategies are not effective for managing the child's behaviour.
- Parents are invited to contact the school with their concerns re. behaviour.
- Class teacher or principal may contact the parent.

Scoil Cholmcille

- Generally the teacher/principal will meet the parent without the child present, initially.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

- If a child is presenting as aggressive the staff will work with SENO/NEPS/ HSE to find strategies to deal with the behaviour, manage aggression, protect other children and staff.
- Children may need to obtain psychological assessment.
- The SESS may be contacted to provide appropriate training for staff.
- Guidance is also provided in Managing Challenging Behaviour INTO 2004:11.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the staff may consider removing the child from class/school setting.

5. Suspension/Expulsion

Suspensions are defined as *“Requiring the pupil to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days”*.

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally other interventions will have been tried before 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.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Procedures for Suspension

The school will observe the following:

- Inform the pupil and their parents about the complaint
- Give parents and pupil an opportunity to respond
- Initial suspension no longer generally than 3 days (except in exceptional circumstances)
- Any such suspension is subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998).

Implementing the Suspension

The principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend their child and the letter will confirm:

- The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension begins and ends,
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed,
- The arrangements for returning to school including any commitment to be entered into by the pupil and the parents,
- The provision for an appeal under the Education Act 1998.

When any sanction including suspension is completed the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. The school will then expect the same behaviour of these pupils as of all other pupils.

Expulsion

Scoil Cholmcille

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil.

Before expelling a pupil, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:

1. Meeting with parents and the pupil(s) to try to find ways of helping the pupil(s) to change their behaviour.
2. Making sure that the pupil(s) understand(s) the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist.
3. Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
4. Seeking the assistance of support agencies, if appropriate.

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a pupil requires serious grounds, such that:

The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.

The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.

The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the pupil's behaviour – should only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Expulsion for a First Time Offence

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

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Sexual assault
- Verbal assault

Procedures for expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following 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 deliberates and acts following the hearing.
5. Appeal
Provision for an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act (1998)

6. Keeping Records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation serious incidents of misbehaviour are recorded in the Incident Book.

Records of any investigations into serious incidents are kept.

Notifications of suspensions/expulsions and communications with the NEWB are kept on file

A filing cabinet is kept in the office.

Scoil Cholmcille

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents/guardians send in a note informing teachers in writing of the reason for the child's absence from school. The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences of 20 days or more to the National Education Welfare Board as laid out in Guidelines in the Education Welfare Act.

8. Reference to other Policies

Other school policies/plans that support the implementation of the code of behaviour include:

- SPHE
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Home/school links
- Health & Safety

Success Criteria

The success of the policy will be evident through:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, 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 Responsibility

The following may be consulted in reviewing the code of behaviour

- Pupils
- Parents
- Staff
- Principal
- Board of Management

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Cholmcille on

Date

27/3/17

Signed:

Pádraig Harte, Chair
