

Code of Behaviour Cullina N.S.

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up by the Principal, teaching staff and ancillary staff of Cullina N.S. in consultation with the Board of Management. This policy was reviewed by the staff of Cullina N.S. on May 25th 2009 to ensure that the code was in line with *NEWB Guidelines Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools (2008.)* Pupils were involved by reviewing the rules and by dialoguing with the teachers in relation to the rationale behind the rules. Suggestions were discussed in relation to sanctions and rewards and the fairness of them. Each parent was invited to contribute to the revised code of behaviour and asked to write any proposed amendments on the copy. These proposed amendments were then discussed at the BOM meeting of June 16th 2009 and considered in the light of the ethos of the school.

Rationale

- It is necessary to provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour for the well-being of our school as a community. From this will come a strong sense of civic awareness and care for the environment.
- It is necessary to review the policy at this time to ensure the existing policy is in compliance with legislative requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008. (pp7-9)*
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1)
- Our existing policy is due for review
- The code of behaviour helps all members of the school community to promote a happy environment which leads to learning and social development.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

- The Code of Behaviour expresses the vision, mission and values of this school and its Patron, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Kerry.
- We in Cullina N.S. hope to foster a sense of pride in our school. We hope to work in co-operation with home which has the strongest influence on a child's life. The whole school community are expected to uphold the ethos of the school in an atmosphere of self-discipline, mutual respect and tolerance for others. The basic principles underpinning our Code of Behaviour are outlined in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008. (pp22-23)* and are as follows.

Clarity	Affirmation that everyone's behaviour matters
Focus on promoting good behaviour	Balancing needs
Focus on personal responsibility	Recognition that relationships are crucial
Fairness and Equity	Promoting Equality
Recognition of educational vulnerability	Attention to the welfare of students
Attention to the welfare of staff	Promotion of safety and freedom from threat

Aims

It is our aim to provide a happy and secure environment which is conducive to both the academic and personal development of each child.

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising 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/guardians and pupils in understanding the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of the code.
- To ensure that the system of clear and concise rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Content of policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings taken from *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.(p 8 and page 59)*

- 1. Standards of Behaviour expected in the school**
- 2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**
 - Staff
 - Board of Management
 - Parents/guardians
 - Pupils
- 3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**
 - Classroom
 - Playground
 - Other areas in the school
 - School related activities
 - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
- 4. The way in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour**
 - Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
 - Involving parents/guardians in management of problem behaviour
 - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
- 5. Procedures for notifying the school about reasons for absence from school**
- 6. Suspension/Expulsion**
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion
 - Appeals
- 7. Reference to other policies**
- 8. Keeping Records**
 - (a) Class
 - (b) Playground
 - (c) School records

1. Standards of Behaviour in School

As required by Section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare Act, prior to registering a pupil the principal teacher shall provide the parents/guardians 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/guardians 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'.

The standards of behaviour expected in this school reflect the following values of respect for self and others, kindness and willingness to help others, courtesy and good manners, fairness, readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and forgiveness.

In Cullina N.S. we expect

- Respect and Courtesy: All pupils are expected to treat staff, their fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of foul language is unacceptable.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Children are expected to line up when the bell rings at the end of break time and lunch time.
- Children are expected to walk in hallways and corridors to minimise potential danger of accidents.
- Noise is discouraged in class lines and in the corridor on the way to and from breaks.
- Accidents are brought to the attention of the teacher on yard duty who decides what action is necessary to take. Small injuries will be dealt with on the yard by the teacher on yard duty. If the first aid box is required the teacher will bring the child to the staff room for attention.
- More serious injuries will be notified to the parents by phone.
- The treatment of children's injuries will be in line with Appendix 45 "Teachers and Administration of Medicines in Schools" C.P.S.M.A. Handbook.
- All accidents and injuries other than minor ones will be recorded in the yard book which is retained in the staff room.
- Children are expected to show the same respect that they show to their class teacher to all teachers and staff.
- Children must have the permission of their own teacher before entering another classroom.
- **Children are not allowed to leave the school premises without permission.** Children may however with the permission of the teacher on yard duty retrieve a ball from over the fence during break time.
- Children are expected to treat all those they encounter in school with respect i.e teachers, staff, pupils, neighbours, helpers and any visitors. Aggressive behaviour is not tolerated.
- School begins at 9.20am and ends at 3.00pm. All pupils are expected to be present between these times. The school is not responsible for the safety of children on the premises outside of these hours. Parents of course may collect children from school during school time for example medical/dentist appointments. In such cases the class teacher should be informed as a matter of courtesy by providing a written note in advance or in the event of unforeseen circumstance by contacting the school directly. **Parents/guardians collecting children other than their own may be required to sign a sign-out book.** Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds at any stage unless their parents/guardians are there to collect them.
- School ends for Junior and Senior Infants classes at 2.00pm. All children must be collected at the gate except for Junior Infants at the beginning of the year.

- Full uniform must be worn at all times with the exception of sport events, where school tracksuit, shorts, etc. may be worn. **All items should be clearly marked with the child's name.**
- Personal Property: Children are asked to have their names on coats, jumpers, cardigans and other personal property such as school books, copies and lunch boxes, etc.
- Pupils are expected to be attentive in class and complete all assignments. Parents/guardians are encouraged to oversee homework. Parents/guardians/Guardians are expected to sign the homework diary when they deem it to be successfully completed. **In Junior/Senior Infants parents/guardians sign homework page which is then dated by the class teacher.**
- The school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act 2000 (section 21) to report absences in excess of twenty days cumulatively to the National Education Welfare Board. Every absence of a child must be accounted for by either forwarding a note, providing a retrospective note in the homework journal or by making contact with the school.
- Playground rules will be devised with regard to the health and safety of all pupils. Rough and unfair play and coarse language are always forbidden.
- In the interest of health, a high standard of personal hygiene is expected and infectious illnesses should be notified to the school immediately.
- Glass bottles are not allowed in school.
- Chocolate, lollipops, fizzy drinks, chewing gum, Taytos and Pringles are not allowed in the school. Refer to Healthy Eating policy.

Note: As we are a green school, we discourage the use of tinfoil and cling film to wrap lunches. We encourage parents/guardians to provide their children with lunch boxes.

- All forms of bullying, either verbal or physical are strictly forbidden and will be dealt with very severely in accordance with the school policy. Parents/guardians and pupils are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to the class teacher and/or the principal. All members of the school community are expected to be particularly vigilant and mindful of such behaviour.
- At least once in the school year there will be focus on the issues around bullying during "Anti Bullying Week".
- All pupils are expected to co-operate in keeping the school and its environs litter free.
- Generally there is no homework at the weekends but occasionally it may be given at the discretion of the teacher.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

In Cullina National School we aim to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour and discipline. This involves a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians. (Circular 20/90).

Staff: Through systematic planning staff confirm that all school policies and practices support the aims of our Code of Behaviour. We have a team work approach to behaviour and we review the Code of Behaviour on an ongoing basis. With encouragement and guidance offered by all school staff the student will gain a better understanding of the rules concerning safety and respect for others. Staff will encourage honesty, fairness, courtesy, co-operation, forgiveness, empathy, accepting difference and valuing the uniqueness of each person, understanding, friendship, justice and fair-play, self-respect and self-discipline.

Our Code of Behaviour caters for all children. All staff will be sensitive to various factors, particular circumstances and cultural differences that may affect individual children's behaviour. Each new and/or temporary staff member is requested to read a copy of the Code of Behaviour to familiarise themselves with both the approach and the content.

Teachers and other staff members can play important roles in the work in the review and updating of the code annually. They bring to this work their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning; their experience of what works to help students to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community (p. 16 Guidelines)

Providing opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and that help students to change behaviour (p. 29 Guidelines)

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

Principles for positive behaviour

- Plan for good behaviour.
- Deal with misbehaviour in a positive manner at all times
- Separate the behaviour from the child.
- Offer a choice when sanctioning a child.
- Actively build trust and support among teachers and pupils.
- Model the behaviour you want.
- Be mindful that the certainty of the sanction and not the severity of the sanction is what are important.
- Re-connect and repair the relationship.
- Keep rules to a minimum.
- Allow time for good behaviour to be learned.

SPHE Curriculum

- 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 behaving and interacting and conflict resolution skills.

The activities to develop these skills are outlined in the school's SPHE plan.

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 of Management reviewed the draft code of discipline at its meeting on 16th.June 2009.

- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis.
- The Principal will inform the B.O.M. of all serious breaches of behaviour.

Parents/guardians

- Co-operation between parents/guardians and staff is encouraged.
- Parents/guardians support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:
 - Parents/guardians ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually
 - Parents/guardians encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
 - Parents/guardians being aware of and co-operating with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
 - Parents/guardians attending meetings at the school if requested
 - Parents/guardians helping their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
 - Parents/guardians ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school.

Pupils

Pupils are involved in the on-going implementation of the Code of Behaviour by

Explaining, understanding and agreeing the Code of Behaviour

Discussing the rules for the classroom in collaboration with the teacher

Discussing the rules for the playground and corridors in collaboration with the teachers

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

In Cullina N.S. we have adopted the following strategies for promotion of good behaviour

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A visit to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group, a class or the whole school
- Delegating some special responsibilities or privileges
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- Age appropriate merit system;
- Stars/stickers/stamps/certificates system: All classes
- Draw attention to the good behaviour/improved behaviour of other pupils.
- We model and teach good behaviour, manners and respect, acceptable behaviour, positive social skills, speaking respectfully

Classroom

- **Classroom Rules/behavioural expectations in each class are consistent with the school's ethos. They are**
- Essential for the smooth running of a lesson
- Democratically established by all class members and the teacher at the beginning of the school year.
- Based on the rights and responsibilities of pupils and teacher.
- Few in number.
- Clearly expressed in positive terms.
- Displayed where they can be seen by all, pictorially for Jnr./Snr. Infants.
- Understood by all pupils.
- Applied consistently.
- Referred to regularly.
- Rang 1-Rang 6:

1. We will come to school on time and prepare for class
2. We will enter and leave the class in an orderly fashion.
3. We will listen when the teacher or another pupil is speaking
4. We will work quietly and not interrupt or distract others.
5. We will raise our hand and wait our turn to speak
6. We will keep our classroom clean and tidy
7. We will not use the internet or mobile phone without permission
8. We will respect school property and the property of fellow students
9. We will stay seated and quiet when the teacher is out of the room
10. We will be polite and respectful at all times
11. We will always do our best.
12. We will never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal or the class teacher.

- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour
- Visit of the principal to the classroom to reinforce the rules on a regular basis and as the need arises

Playground

- Zones are created within the playground providing sections for specific age groups
- We have a concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted.
- **Playground Rules:**

1. Each class will leave in an orderly fashion to go out to break. In the interests of safety teachers will encourage pupils to walk quietly along the corridor.
2. All staff bring serious misbehaviour to the attention of the class teacher and/or principal
3. A bell rings at the end of break to inform pupils that break has ended. All pupils go to their designated line on the playground.
4. Children are not allowed to leave the play surface area of the yard without permission except in the case of a child needing to use the toilet. Pupils are not permitted to play on the grass during wet weather and pupils are not permitted to go up to the field during wet weather. Each classroom is provided with a number of games for use during inclement weather.
5. Children are not allowed to play in front of the school building during break time.
6. In the event of sudden rainfall children may enter the school directly after the bell rings without the necessity of lining up on designated lines.
7. The Infants are allowed to use the bathroom in their own pre-fabs during break-time.

- *The teacher on Yard Duty will record incidences of misbehaviour of pupils in the Yard book.*
- **Rules are displayed in the GP room and in their homework diaries. Attention is drawn to these rules on a regular basis. Pupils buy into these rules through regular discussion with the class teacher.**
- We teach playground games to children. Playground games and markings are painted on the tarmac.
- The principal will decide if conditions are suitable for outside play.
- Everybody is in or everybody out will be the general 'rule of thumb'.

Other areas in the school

Children are allowed to use the toilet at break time as necessary. Good toileting practices learned at home will be expected in school also. Attention is drawn to hygiene.

In the GP room, children have to listen to instruction and move with care. Children respond promptly to clear signals from the teacher.

All children are reminded of these rules on a regular basis.

School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour would usually apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school, swimming lessons, after school basketball training, school football competitions, nature walks, history trails, etc.

Road safety is taught to the children through the SPHE curriculum, with particular reference to travelling by bus and cycling/walking to school

Parents/Guardians are invited to accompany the school on out of school activities for health and safety reasons when required.

School staff would contact the venue, e.g. swimming pool, activity centre, Church, in advance and find out what the rules are which are then communicated to all pupils.

Children are required to show respect to all people and all things as part of the catholic ethos of the school.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Refer to Ch. 7 Promoting good behaviour, 'Developing a Code of Behaviour': Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

Good behaviour is recognised in the following ways:

- Age and/or ability appropriate rewards to be decided on in individual cases and in line with school ethos.
- Give attention
- Stickers
- Go to Principal's Office
- Tell parents/guardians orally or through the class diary
- Treats – play Music, go on social outings, using play equipment
- Praise the good behaviour / Use peers to model exemplary behaviour
- Get class to give a clap
- Give a responsibility of doing a job
- Go around to other classes to show good work output
- Let pupils choose an activity they enjoy on completion of a task
- Find a Pupil's motivator and use it for positive reinforcement
- Catch them being good and reward them
- **School reports also mention child's good behaviour**

Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

Refer to Ch. 8 Responding to inappropriate behaviour, 'Developing a Code of Behaviour': Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline '*the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined*'.

Cullina National School has agreed ways of describing behaviour, arrangements for recording behaviour and a ladder of intervention-See NEWB page 49

The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy employed by the teacher

- *Verbal reprimand(including advice how to improve)*
- *Reasoning with pupils*
- *Removal from the group (in class)- Time-out table*
- *Withdrawal of privileges*
- *Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group*
- *Prescribing extra work*
- *Carrying out a useful task in the school*
- *Detention under teachers supervision for a five minute period*
- *Referral to Principal*
- *Note to parents/guardian; should the problem persist, it may be necessary to have on-going discussion with the parents/guardians, always with the objective of helping the child.*
- *Formal report to the Board of Management if serious breach of rules occurs. In this case, parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend a meeting.*
- *Suspension (in accordance with Rule 130 of Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular7/88 and as outlined in NEWB Guidelines pp-70-78)*

Steps to be taken by staff when dealing with serious misdemeanours:

Send to principal

Following consultation with the principal, the principal or class teacher will send a note home requesting a meeting to discuss the child's behaviour.

The class teacher may meet with the parents/guardians. The class teacher and the principal may meet with the parents/guardians. This is decided on a case by case basis. An account of these serious misdemeanours and minutes of the meetings is kept in the incidents book.

If it is considered appropriate in the professional opinion of the teachers the child may be present at all or a part of this meeting.

Violent behaviour that results in an injury

In the event of a seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils and the staff, the school will take appropriate steps e.g. parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and assurances will be got that such behaviour will not be repeated again. Specific warnings and advice will be given and the BOM may need to be informed. Staff are continually updated on events.

Involving parents/guardians in the management of problem behaviour

- Teachers are mindful that children have to be given time to learn the correct behaviour, therefore, if there isn't noticeable improvement in child's behaviour over a period of time, parents/guardians are contacted.
- Initially, the class teacher will send a note home in child's homework diary (in the case of Infants, an oral report may be given to parents) so that parents are aware that there is a problem. The parents are asked to speak to their child about the behaviour. If this does not resolve the matter, the class teacher will phone the parents and request them to attend a meeting with the class teacher. Parents are respected at all times and invited to share their insights with the teacher. A co-operative approach is encouraged. Parents are also encouraged to take on board our sanctions when trying to resolve an issue at home to ensure consistency with the home and the school.
- All parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher or principal so that the concern may be dealt with in a thorough manner.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

Strategies used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems;

Initially, children are withdrawn from the group and go to the time out table. Parents are contacted in the case where they pose a threat to other pupils or staff.

- o Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS,

The care team in this school comprises of the Principal, class teacher, LS/RT, parents/guardians and SNA (where appropriate)

- o Professional development is available to staff: e.g. SENO, SESS, Colleges of Education, Education Centres, Sign Posts manual
- o Should the school ever require to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, it would seek expert advice, competent legal advice and consult Managing Challenging Behaviour - Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004: 11

Where deemed necessary a child may be placed on a Reduced Daily Time Table.

The relevant class teacher will be made aware of any child protection issues that may be pertaining to pupils before making a decision to contact the home.

5. Suspension / Expulsion

Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include our procedures for suspension and expulsion in our code of behaviour.

Suspension

Cullina N.S. as required by law will follow fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice when proposing to suspend or expel a student. Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- **the right to be heard**
- **the right to impartiality.**

In a school, fair procedures apply to:

- the **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and
- the process of **decision-making** as to
 - (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and
 - (b) what sanction to impose.

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of our particular school.

The **principles** of fair procedures always apply, but the degree of formality required in implementing fair procedures will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and on the seriousness of the possible sanction 'Developing a Co

de of Behaviour': Guidelines for Schools **Page 67**

Authority to suspend

The Board of Management of Cullina National School has the authority to suspend a student.

Suspension:

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension In exceptional circumstances, the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the BOM may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

'Automatic' suspension A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents/guardians, teachers and students, 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.

Procedures in respect of suspension

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

- inform the student and their parents/guardians about the complaint
- give parents/guardians and student an opportunity to respond.

Inform the student and parents/guardians

Let the student and their parents/guardians know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents/guardians will be informed in person and subsequently in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents/guardians in writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having let parents/guardians know. It also ensures that parents/guardians are 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.

Give an opportunity to respond

Parents/guardians and student should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the student and their parents/guardians provides an 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. Photographic evidence may be produced where feasible. 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 student's behaviour. If a student and their parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should 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 negative behaviour. The school should record the invitations made to parents/guardians and their response.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents/guardians must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents/guardians.

The period of suspension

A student should 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. Each Board of Management should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than three days might be approved. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. However, a Board of Management may wish to authorize the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

Suspension

The Board of Management should normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. The Board should formally review any proposal to suspend a student, 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*. These provisions enable school authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

Appeals

The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student 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 and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and should be given information about how to appeal.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents/guardians are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools should advise parents/guardians of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

- Parents/guardians will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms by the Principal and Chairperson of the BOM during an official meeting, whereby parents/guardians are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion.
- The BOM will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal should notify the parents/guardians and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

The letter should be clear and easy to understand. Particular care should be taken in communicating with parents/guardians who may have reading difficulties, or whose first language is not the language of the school.

Engaging with student and parents/guardians

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal and/or another staff member delegated by the Principal and/or a member of the BOM meets with the parents/guardians to emphasise their responsibility in helping the student to behave well when the student returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this. Where parents/guardians do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

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 and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents/guardians about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The school should have a plan to help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. This plan will help to avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifies a cycle of academic failure. Successful re-integration goes beyond academic work. A suspended student may feel angry or resentful about their suspension, and these feelings can trigger problems with reintegration which, in turn, may lead to further problem behaviour. Where possible, the school should arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Clean slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school should expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Suspension records and reports

Records of investigation and decision-making:

Formal written records should 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 should report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

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

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management should 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.

Expulsion

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, ‘A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer’ (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take ‘...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.’ (Section 24(5))

A student 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. As part of the code of behaviour, the Board of Management should ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedures for, expulsion which are in line with these Guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

Authority to expel

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated.

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- 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).

Expulsion

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

'Automatic' expulsion

A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents/guardians, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does 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 student should be expelled for a first 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 student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management should undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

Inappropriate use of expulsion

Expulsion should not be proposed for:

- poor academic performance
- poor attendance or lateness
- minor breaches of the code of behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter.

Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student, (see **10.3** and **10.4** for information about fair

procedures). 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.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

It is a matter for each Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents/guardians due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

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

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

- inform the student 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 student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents/guardians should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. 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 student must 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 student and their parents/guardians is essential. 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 student's behaviour.

If a student and their parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should 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 should 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 makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should:

- inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents/guardians
- 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 to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should 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 student).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parents/guardians, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should 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. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents/guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board should 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 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 Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)). The Board of Management should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*, s4A). The Board should inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents/guardians should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the 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 student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, section 24).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education. Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents/guardians should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents/guardians and the student should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The appeals process

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management should 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.

6. Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept using their enrolment number or initials. Records are written in a factual and impartial manner on school reports and in the incident book.

Class level

- o The SNA will keep a factual diary of the special needs pupils to whom she is assigned.
- o Class teacher who has concerns about the behaviour of a child who hasn't been allocated an SNA or resource hours will maintain a factual account of the child's positive and negative behaviours.
- o There will be agreed standards of behaviour amongst the teaching staff. There will also be agreed standards for wording reports.

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, "*the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*" Section 18 stipulates that parents/guardians must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

- The following strategies are used to encourage school attendance e.g.
 - o Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
 - o System for acknowledging/rewarding good or improved attendance
 - o Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
 - o Adapting the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
 - o Making parents/guardians aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- School's policy in relation to explanation of pupil absences: Parents/guardians send in a note in advance (where a known absence will occur e.g .medical appointment) informing teachers of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. Parents/Guardians may write a note retrospectively in the child's homework diary explaining a child's absence. These notes are retained by the school.
- The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board? (*See forms on www.newb.ie*)

8. Reference to other Policies

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Harassment
- o Sexual harassment
- o Enrolment
- o Record keeping
- o Home / School links
- o Health & Safety
- o Equality
- o Special Educational Needs

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/guardians and pupils*

Roles and Responsibility

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy are the BOM, Principal, teaching staff, parents/guardians, pupils, SNA.s Refer to section 1of this policy for role played by the aforementioned. *The principal and teaching staff will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.*

Implementation Date

This policy will apply from September 2009.

Timetable for Review

This updated and reviewed policy will be reviewed **Annually.**

Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified the policy on *12th June 2012*

Signed on behalf of the board,

Chairperson: *Griffith John Griffiths*

Secretary: *Maire Bn Uí Chroinin*

Reference Section

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
 - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
 - (2) Suspension
 - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.
- Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino