

## **Star of the Sea NS, Riverchapel**

### **Code of Behaviour**

#### **Title**

Star of the Sea NS Code of Behaviour

#### **Introductory statement**

This policy was reviewed in 2025 and involved consultation with staff, pupils, the Parents' Association and the Board of Management.

#### **Rationale**

Under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000<sup>1</sup>, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its pupils.

#### **Aim**

Pupils will be educated in a caring and orderly environment. Every effort will be made by members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the issue of behaviour in the school. We want to create a climate where every child is afforded the opportunity to develop to his/her full potential. To achieve this, pupils are expected to behave and this must be supported by parents/guardians.

The school:

- Encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- Creates a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- Encourages pupils to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour
- Builds positive relationships of mutual respect among pupils, staff and parents/guardians
- Encourages respect, tolerance and consideration of others
- Informs parents/guardians and pupils about the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour
- Recognises that each one is unique while accepting individual differences.
- Ensures that every effort is made to ensure that the code of conduct is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.

#### **The expected standards of behaviour in the School**

The approach to school behaviour focuses on promoting good behaviour, which is built on respect for ourselves, for each other and for property. There are a number of specific school rules but in general our rules can be expressed very simply as:

- *Be Kind and Respectful*
- *Stay Safe and Responsible*
- *Try Your Best and Never Give Up*
- *Listen and Follow Directions*
- *Care for Our School and Environment*

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, if any provision in this code of behaviour is in conflict with a legally required provision in the NEWB Guidelines, the legally required provision in the NEWB Guidelines will take precedence

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion of all pupils is promoted. For example, we have children with special educational needs (SEN) in the school and recognise that these children need to be instructed and supported to reach the expectations for their behaviour, taking account of their needs and challenges, which may be aided by targets in their Student Support File (SSF).

## **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

The strategies for promoting positive behaviour are set out in this code. Essentially a whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour is adopted and the standards of behaviour that are expected are communicated to the school community.

## **School Rules**

### **Opening/closing times & attendance**

- Pupils assemble in their classrooms between 08.50 and 09.00. Lateness is to be explained by parents/guardians either verbally or in writing on Aladdin.
- Pupils must never leave the school without permission. Pupils leaving during school hours must be signed out by a parent/guardian or a nominated adult.
- A written explanation for all absences from school or a written request to leave school early must be supplied by the parents/guardians
- Supervision begins at 08.50am, school starts at 09.00am and ends at 13.40 for pupils in Junior / Senior Infants and 14.40 for pupils in First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes. The School does not accept responsibility for children outside of these times unless on a school outing or engaged in a school organised school related activity, about which parents are notified in advance.

### **Classroom & school building**

- Pupils must enter the classroom in an orderly manner
- Unless otherwise instructed, pupils should remain seated before and during class and while eating at appointed times
- Pupils are expected to listen to instructions carefully and follow them
- Pupils should put their hand up if they wish to ask a question/speak
- Pupils must follow agreed class rules
- Class teachers will escort their class to the exit at break times and escort pupils in from the yard.
- Aladdin is used to record relevant incidents. Children who are placed in reflection room are supervised during breaks and reasons for reflection will be recorded on Aladdin
- Pupils must not run inside the school building. They should walk, show consideration to others and enter/exit the school premises/building with care and in a quiet fashion.
- Pupils must follow the arrows on the left hand side in the corridor.

### **Homework**

- Pupils should complete all prescribed homework
- Homework should be completed to the best of the pupil's ability
- Pupils must comply with the homework policy.

### **Breaks**

- Play in the schoolyard is confined to the designated areas. Pupils must remain on the correct side of the red line during breaks
- Under no circumstances should a pupil leave the schoolyard without the permission of the teacher or SNA on yard duty
- Rough play of any description is not allowed and any incidents should be reported to the teacher or SNA on duty
- Pupils must obey the teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) on the yard
- Entering the school building during break times should be avoided unless absolutely necessary and only with permission
- On hearing the bell, pupils must stop what they are doing and must walk to their lines and line up in an orderly manner
- If the weather does not permit going out to the yard, the pupils will remain in their classrooms and are supervised by teachers and SNAs assigned to specific areas
- Pupils must abide by the yard rules
- When in the yard, pupils must use the designated toilets
- Arrangements will be made for pupils who, for medical reasons, and at the request of their parents'/guardians' do not go out to the yard
- Incidents of misbehaviour are managed in accordance with this code of behaviour
- Any accident/incidents should be recorded on Aladdin

### **School Outings**

- The expected standards of behaviour must be maintained by pupils on school outings/school organised events.

### **General safety**

- Pupils must only use the pedestrian gate
- Swinging on chairs is forbidden
- Skate boards and roller blades are not allowed on the school grounds
- Cycling is not allowed in the school grounds
- Footballs are only allowed on the designated areas of the yard
- Helmets with visors and gum shields must be worn during games
- It is strictly forbidden to enter, climb or play in the shrubs, bushes, trees, statue, on the walls, or fences.
- Pushing and horseplay is forbidden.
- Only the designated toilets may be used during break times
- Food should never be brought into the toilet area
- Group of boys/girls should not gather in the toilets
- Pupils must move in and out of the toilets as quickly as possible
- Pupils are strictly forbidden from bringing articles to school which could cause injury to others.

### **School Property**

- Pupils are expected to respect school property and ensure that their litter is put in the bins
- Pupils are responsible for the appearance of, condition and safe keeping of school books
- Chewing gum, glass bottles/containers and crisps are forbidden, healthy lunches are encouraged
- At the end of the day chairs should be stacked, windows closed and the room left tidy

### **Personal property**

- Personal belongings such as games consoles, MP3 players, toys etc. should not be brought to school (except when permission is granted in special circumstances)
- Mobile phones should not be brought to school
- The school will not be responsible for any loss or damage to personal items.
- Any smart devices capable of recording or capturing images are strictly forbidden.

### **Uniform**

- Pupils should wear the school uniform or the school tracksuit everyday, unless otherwise informed
- Leggings and very short shorts are not part of the uniform and thus are not allowed
- Shorts for boys and girls must be knee length
- Pupils are not permitted to wear clothing with offensive graphics, logos or lyrics
- Body piercings of any kind are prohibited and a watch and stud earrings, which must be removed during playtime, are allowed as the only items of jewellery
- Pupils must be neat and tidy.
- **Long hair must be tied back at all times**

### **Substance Misuse**

- Pupils must not use, supply or sell illicit substances, tobacco or alcohol on school property.
- Pupils will be educated on drug and alcohol misuse through the SPHE curricular programme.

## **WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH IN PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

All members of the school community are actively encouraged to be involved in promoting positive behaviour.

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to abide by the code of behaviour and model good behaviour:

- Pupils contribute to devising classroom rules
- Pupils learn about taking personal responsibility for their behaviour thus contributing to each other's wellbeing and the wellbeing of all members of the school community
- Pupils are taught that good behaviour promotes a positive learning atmosphere
- Older children learn the importance of modelling good behaviour e.g. whole school assemblies

### **Staff**

Staff treat all pupils with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

All members of staff familiarise themselves with the code of behaviour and support its implementation. Staff model the school's standards of behaviour in their interactions with pupils and others.

Teachers must conform to the Teaching Council's Code of Conduct.

The promotion and recognition of positive behaviour is achieved through:

- Modelling and reinforcing good behaviour
- Using opportunities to praise and encourage pupils
- Using reward systems e.g. star charts, homework passes, group of the week etc.
- Working with pupils to develop a set of class rules each year
- Explaining school rules to the pupils
- Cooperation between class teachers and the SEN team in the preparation of SSFs and PCPs. Specific targets are set in relation to behaviour

- Ensuring that new staff are made aware of the code of behaviour
- Liaison with outside agencies e.g. Tusla Child & Family Agency, Enable Ireland etc.
- Using the curriculum to support the code of behaviour e.g. SPHE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.

### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring that the code of behaviour is prepared and implemented. The Board of Management provides support to the Principal and staff where necessary, in implementing the code of behaviour, e.g. provision of opportunities for staff development, as appropriate. Where suspension or expulsion may be deemed necessary, the Board of Management will adopt the procedures laid out in the policy which are in accordance with the NEWB Guidelines.

#### The Board of Management

- Is involved in the consultation and review of the code of behaviour and ratifies it.
- Supports staff in the implementation of it
- Becomes involved in certain matters, as outlined in this code of behaviour.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians are required to support this code of behaviour and to model the standards of behaviour expected from pupils. Parents/guardians who wish to enrol their children will be given a copy of the code and must confirm on the enrolment form in writing their acceptance of and compliance with the code of behaviour<sup>2</sup>.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Be aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
- Make appointments outside of teaching hours to see teachers
- Attend meetings at the school if requested. Parent/Teacher meetings are arranged in advance and outside of school teaching hours
- To adhere to signs around the school
- Support the expectation of appropriate behaviour
- Supervise younger, non-school going children at all times while on the school premises
- Explain their child's absence in writing on Aladdin
- Provide a written request for any early collection to the class teacher, and ensure that the child is signed out in the office
- Notify the school of any infectious diseases
- Label properly their children's clothing and belongings
- Ensure that the pupil maintains an appropriate standard of personal hygiene
- Helps with homework and sign the homework diary in accordance with the homework policy

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<sup>2</sup> Section 23 (4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 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 the principal 'may, 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'

Grievances parents or guardians have, must not be posted on social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc), but raised with the relevant staff, as per the appropriate procedure, Grievance Procedure.

Parents/guardians contribute to the development of the code of behaviour. This involvement will draw on their expectations, insights and experience.

### **Notification of a child's absence from school**

It is very important that the parents/guardians notify the school about a pupil's absence. The procedures to be followed by parents/guardians when they are notifying the school about a pupil's absence are as follows:

- The school should be informed on the first day of absence
- The Class Teacher should be informed
- The notification should be sent via Aladdin
- Reasons must be given for the absence
- The school (teacher) will contact parents/guardians by phone or Aladdin when a pupil is absent where contact has not been made by the parents/guardians after 3 unexplained days
- If the parents/guardians do not notify the school of a pupil's absence and/or if the pupil is absent in excess of 20 unexplained days, the school will notify the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), as appropriate.

Parents/guardians are notified when a pupil becomes unwell during the school day and they must collect the pupil from the office where the pupil must be signed out by a parent/guardian.

### **Rewards and Sanctions**

The school operates the strategy "catch them being good". Praise or rewards may be given by some or all of the following means

- Class teachers reward good behaviour in a class setting. At class level, rewards are given at the discretion of the class teacher but in a consistent way. Examples of recognition for positive behaviour and good work are: verbal praise, merit award on the class merit chart, Dojo points, being sent to the Principal's office and other classes for recognition, positive note in the homework diary, display of work that deserves particular recognition, Dojos etc.
- There is a whole school approach to promoting good behaviour in a public setting. Good attendance is rewarded at school assemblies. Pupils' achievements are further appreciated and celebrated at school assemblies. Class/Student of the week is awarded to the class/student which models and exemplifies good behaviour
- Good news is communicated to parents/guardians at parent teacher meetings, both formal and incidental, end of year reports, written comments at the end of work and/or homework journal

### **Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

#### **Dealing with day-to-day behaviour issues**

Pupils frequently bring issues to teachers for resolution when they are unable to resolve them. Teachers encourage, support and show pupils how they may resolve these issues. In this way, pupils build up the skills necessary for the resolution of issues in later life. Pupils are enabled to resolve conflicts with the aid of a teacher.

When the teacher judges it necessary, (s)he will become involved and help resolve a behaviour issue. The vast majority of issues will be resolved at this point. This may happen with or without consulting the parent/guardians, or principal or other designated senior member of staff.

Parents/guardians are kept informed, as appropriate, about the resolution of behaviour issues and the teacher decides when this is appropriate, or responds to parents'/guardians' queries at any time. Teachers act on the principle that it is better for parents/guardians to be aware of behaviour issues. The principal may intervene informally in the resolution of minor issues, as appropriate.

### **Involving parents/guardians in management of problem behaviour**

Ordinarily parents/guardians are contacted when a pupil's behaviour is causing disruption/harm to the pupil and/or to other pupils. For isolated incidents and in appropriate cases, pupils will be given the opportunity to improve before parents/guardians are contacted. However, if the problem behaviour persists or if the matter merits it, parents/guardians will be immediately notified and will be invited to the school to discuss the issue. Initially, the meeting will be with the class teacher, but the nature of the behaviour may warrant a meeting with the class teacher and principal. Strategies for modifying behaviour will be discussed and behaviour will be reviewed within an agreed timeframe.

If children engage in repeated minor misdemeanours or major misbehaviour, the incidents are recorded, and parents/guardians are informed by phone, note or meeting. Initial contact is made by the class teacher, or may be made by the principal depending on the gravity of the misbehaviour. Meetings with parents/guardians are arranged outside of teaching hours at a mutually suitable time, and may be attended by both teacher and principal, and the pupil may be invited to attend. A constructive, mutually respectful approach is encouraged. Parents/guardians are welcome to contact the school regarding concerns in which case an appointment will be arranged.

### **DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy or sanction imposed.

### **DEALING WITH MISDEMEANOURS**

#### **Procedures**

The nature of the misdemeanour(s) will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal, with regard to the gravity/ frequency of such misdemeanours as outlined below.

Misdemeanours	Dealing with misdemeanours
<p><b>Examples of <u>minor misdemeanours</u> are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● interrupting class work</li> <li>● arriving late for school</li> <li>● talking in class</li> <li>● Shouting out in class/not putting hand up to speak</li> <li>● running in the school building</li> <li>● the pupil leaving his/her seat without permission</li> <li>● leaving litter around the school</li> <li>● Not lining up appropriately</li> <li>● not wearing the correct uniform</li> <li>● Being discourteous/unmannerly/disrespectful/bad attitude</li> <li>● not completing homework without written explanation etc.</li> <li>● Name calling</li> <li>● Hitting</li> <li>● Kicking</li> <li>● Spitting</li> <li>● Pushing/pulling other children</li> <li>● Excluding other children</li> <li>● Not listening and following instructions</li> <li>● Bad language</li> <li>● Physical Harm</li> <li>● Refusing to do work/homework</li> </ul> <p><b>If any of the above occur in a persistent and/or regular way, they can be treated as serious misdemeanours.</b></p> <p><i>These examples are listed to give an understanding of what can constitute a minor misdemeanour and the list is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive.</i></p>	<p><b>Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with misdemeanours.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verbal reprimand/reasoning with pupil</li> <li>● Re-do work/do work at another time/at home if incomplete</li> <li>● Requiring the writing of a story of what happened/ behaviour reflection to be signed by parents/ guardians.</li> <li>● Note in homework journal to be signed by parents/guardians or message sent on Aladdin to inform parents/guardians</li> <li>● Temporary separation from peers</li> <li>● Loss of yard time with their class</li> <li>● Loss of privileges, e.g. Golden Time, class trips/tours</li> <li>● Shadowing a teacher or SNA on yard or standing at the railings for a set amount of time.</li> <li>● Sending to another teacher/classroom.</li> <li>● Sanction for pupils whose name appears in the Reflection Room book more than three times.</li> <li>● Note to parents/guardians concerning further misbehaviour in yard</li> <li>● Send to Principal</li> <li>● Class teacher meets parents/guardians</li> <li>● Principal meets parents/guardians concerning behaviour.</li> <li>● 3<sup>rd</sup> time of physical harm requires behavioural management programme and management involved</li> <li>● Not sent on class messages if out of uniform</li> </ul>

Serious Misdemeanours	Dealing with serious misdemeanours
<p><b>Examples of <u>serious misdemeanours</u> are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being constantly disruptive in class</li> <li>• telling lies</li> <li>• stealing</li> <li>• damaging other pupil's property</li> <li>• bullying</li> <li>• bringing weapons to school</li> <li>• offensive text message(s)</li> <li>• deliberately injuring a fellow pupil</li> <li>• Bringing inappropriate music/literature to school</li> <li>• leaving the school premises without permission</li> <li>• endangering self/fellow pupils while in the school or on school related outings</li> <li>• misbehaviour that is <b>persistent/regular</b> and/or persistently disruptive to learning and/or potentially dangerous etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>These examples are listed to give an understanding of what can constitute a serious misdemeanor and the list is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive.</i></p>	<p><b>Examples of steps which can be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send to Principal</li> <li>• Reflection Room</li> <li>• Principal contacts parents/guardians</li> <li>• Principal and teacher meets with parents/guardians.</li> <li>• Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents/guardians requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal.</li> <li>• Suspension/expulsion in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and the NEWB Guidelines.</li> </ul>

**NOTE: Bullying is always unacceptable and is dealt with under the school's Anti-Bullying Policy which is appended at Appendix 3 of this code of behaviour. Alleged bullying will in the first instance be dealt with under the Anti-Bullying policy, the BÍ Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and procedures (when ratified), and where appropriate under this code.**

### **Managing emotional behaviour disorders**

Parental/ guardian's consent is sought for psychological assessment/multidisciplinary assessment for pupils who present with indicators of an emotional behavioural disorder. Following assessment, appropriate support is sought from available services e.g. Tusla Child & Family Agency, NEPS and SEN resources are allocated, as appropriate.

When, notwithstanding the use of the appropriate interventions, the behaviour persists or where there is no parental/guardians consent for an assessment, the behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with this code of behaviour which may include the use of suspension and/or expulsion as appropriate.

### **SEN**

In the event of a pupil with SEN exhibiting aggressive or violent behaviour, the appropriate interventions will be put in place to ensure the safety of the pupil, other pupils and staff which will be done in accordance with the school's SEN policy.

When, notwithstanding the use of the appropriate interventions, the behaviour persists, the behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with this code of behaviour which may include the use of suspension and/or expulsion as appropriate.

### **Participation in the school day**

Prior to admission or at any other time during the pupil's time in the school, there may be consultation with the parents/guardians to review the pupil's participation in the school day, with a view to phasing in the participation of the child. This would be considered where a pupil's behaviour is such that it interferes with his/her right to education or that of other pupils or with his/her safety or that of other pupils and/or staff. This will also be done in conjunction with the Education Welfare Officer and in accordance with this code of behaviour.

This phased participation, which is not a sanction, would be reviewed on a regular basis, with participation being increased, maintained, or decreased in line with targets being achieved.

Where, notwithstanding the use of this intervention the behaviour persists, the behaviour may have to be dealt with under the suspension/expulsion provisions of this code of behaviour.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

The procedures in relation to suspension and expulsion are in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

### **Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed as the need arises or at the end of June 2027. This code of conduct may be subject to change at any stage during the school year as deemed necessary by the Board of Management.

### **Ratification & Communication**

The Board of Management officially ratified this policy in May 2025.

All parents/guardians will get a copy of the policy following ratification and thereafter prior to enrolment.

**Signed:**

(Chairperson)



Date:

Wed 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**This policy has been reviewed on**

## **Appendix 1**

### **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is defined as: *requiring the pupil to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.*

During the period of a suspension, the pupil retains his/her place in the school.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil. It has delegated authority in writing to the Principal to suspend a pupil for not more than three days. If the suspension is for more than three days the matter will be referred to the board of management for consideration and approval. However, the Board of management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances, where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. However, the Board of Management reserves the right to impose a longer period of suspension in appropriate cases.

Suspension will 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 pupil requires serious grounds such as:

1. The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
2. The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety.
3. The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

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

In cases where the Principal is imposing the suspension, where possible, the incident will be investigated by the Deputy Principal.

#### **Factors which will be considered before suspending a pupil:**

##### **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- What is the precise description of the behaviour
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

##### **The Context of the Behaviour**

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (eg in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (eg bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the pupil?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (eg particular circumstances, special educational needs)?

### **The Impact of the behaviour**

- How are other pupils and staff affected by the pupil's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some pupils or teachers?
- Does the pupil understand the impact of his/her behaviour on others

### **The interventions tried to date**

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents/guardians been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available and/or appropriate
- Is the pupil or parents/guardians involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance eg Child and adolescent services

### **Whether suspension is a proportionate response**

- Does the pupil's behaviour warrant suspension
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil?

### **The possible impact of suspension**

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the pupil to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other pupils affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the pupil?

### **Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the pupil's behaviour. The suspension should:**

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the pupil and his/her parents/guardians
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on a pupil and his/her parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

### **Forms of suspension:**

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

#### **Temporary Suspension**

The grounds for a temporary suspension will be of a serious nature as listed in 1, 2, 3.

A pupil will not be suspended again shortly after s/he returns to school unless:

- S/he engages in 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.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

1. It will inform the pupil and his/her parents/guardians about the complaint
2. It will give the parents/guardians and pupil an opportunity to respond

### **1. Informing the pupil and his/her parents/guardians**

The pupil and his/her parents/guardians will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension. Parents/guardians may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. If informed by phone, a follow up letter will be sent.

### **2. It will give the parents/guardians and pupil an opportunity to respond**

Parents/guardians & the pupil will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting will be held with the pupil and the parents/guardians and they will be given an opportunity 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 the 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 his/her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write to them advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending the rescheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The school will record the invitations made to the 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 pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. The suspension will not be open-ended. The parents/guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

### **Review**

The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension will bring the number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under S.29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended)

### **Appeals**

A principal's decision to suspend a pupil can be appealed to the Board of Management.

## **Section 29 Appeal**

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).

At the time the parents/guardians are being formally notified of a suspension, they and the pupil will be told of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills under S.29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) and will be given information on how to appeal.

## **Implementing the Suspension**

### **Written notification**

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

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitment to be entered into by the pupil and the parents/guardians (for example, the parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management (where applicable)
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills under S.29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) (where applicable)

Where appropriate, when a decision to suspend has been made, the Principal or another member of staff delegated by the Principal will meet the parents/guardians to emphasise their responsibility in helping the pupil to behave well when the pupil returns to school and to offer help and guidance on this. Where the parents/guardians do not agree to meet 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 & Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended).

## **After the Suspension ends**

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

## **Re-integrating the pupil**

The school will put in place a plan to help the pupil to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. This plan will help to avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifying a cycle of academic failure. Where possible, the school will try to arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the pupil during the re-integration process.

### **Clean slate**

When the suspension is completed, the pupil will 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 will expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

### **Records & Reports**

#### **Records**

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation process (including the 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**

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

The Principal will report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines as per the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Board of Management 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.

## **Appendix 2**

### **EXPULSION**

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

The Board of Management's policy on and procedures for expulsion are in line with the NEWB Guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

#### **Authority to expel**

Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is reserved to the Board and will not be delegated.

#### **Grounds for Expulsion**

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the pupil's behaviour, it is recognised that is a very serious step.

A pupil may be expelled where:

- 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

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, other interventions will have been tried and it is believed that all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour have been exhausted.

#### **Automatic expulsion**

The Board of Management has decided as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents/guardians, teachers and pupils, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction as follows: - Having, using, supplying or selling drugs on school property, having, using, supplying or selling alcohol on school property. The Board of Management will 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 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

## **Factors to consider before proposing to expel a pupil**

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a pupil including:

### **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

### **The context of the behaviour**

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or other factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular circumstances, special educational needs)?

### **The impact of the behaviour**

- How are other pupils and staff affected by the pupil's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

### **The interventions tried to date**

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents/guardians been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the pupil or parent/guardians involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the pupil to change their behaviour?

### **Whether expulsion is a proportionate response**

- Is the pupil's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil?

### **The possible impact of expulsion**

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the pupil?
- Will the pupil be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a pupil who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

### **Inappropriate use of expulsion**

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

### **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

The Board of Management is required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a pupil. 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.

The Board of Management will decide whether 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 the 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 will:

- Inform the pupil and his/her parents/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Give the 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 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 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 will take place between the pupil and his/her parents/guardians. The purpose of this meeting is to provide them with 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. 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/or his/her 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: the allegations against the pupil; 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**

The Board of Management will 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 had any prior involvement in 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 the pupil, it will hold a hearing. The Board of Management meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board of Management procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents/guardians, put their case to the Board of Management 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 of Management must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the pupil. Parents/guardians can be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board of Management 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, the Board of Management will 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 pupil should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The pupil will not be expelled before the passing of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)*).

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

### **Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer**

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a pupil 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*).

Pending these consultations about the pupil's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of pupils is secured (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)*). The Board may consider it

appropriate to suspend a pupil during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the pupil during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils 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 pupil should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel, this task will be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents/guardians and the pupil will be told about the right to appeal and will be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the pupil.

#### **An Appeal**

A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29 as amended). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil.

#### **Review of 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.

### **Appendix 3**

**The Anti-Bullying Policy is appended.**