



# Code of Behaviour

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of the Convent Primary School has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents. This policy was initially drafted in November 2009. The teachers, pupils, parents and Board of Management were all involved in drawing up this policy. It was reviewed in 2017 and again in November 2019.

The Code of Behaviour details:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school
- The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour
- The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards
- The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of the Convent Primary School has been developed in accordance with *'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.*

## **CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL**

At the Convent Primary School, we aspire to help each child reach her full potential in a Christian atmosphere where respect, responsibility and co-operation are central to all learning experiences. Our Code of Behavior outlines how we cultivate good relationships between all partners in Education, staff, parents and pupils.

## **POLICY FORMULATION**

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps:

- Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe
  - Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal
  - The Initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received
  - The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.
  - The Board of Management, Staff and Parents Association were consulted in the review of this policy in 2019.
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## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE**

The aims and objectives of the code are:

1. To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development,
2. To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others,
3. To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences,
4. To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community,
5. To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures,
6. To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school,
7. To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement.

## **WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH**

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

## **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

### **Pupils**

#### ***General Behaviour***

Each pupil is expected to:

- Respect, obey and co-operate with the whole school staff.
  - To treat each other with respect and kindness at all times.
  - To be ready to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
  - To be courteous and mannerly to staff, pupils and visitors to the school.
  - Show respect for the property of; the school, other children and their own belongings
  - Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual. School begins at 9.15 am.
  - Do her best both in school and for homework.
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## **Classroom Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Do assigned homework both written and oral with care.
- Listen attentively in class and to carry out the teachers instructions.
- Keep the classroom tidy and litter free.
- To work to the best of her ability.
- To take responsibility for their own work.
- Obtain teachers permission to leave the classroom
- Respect other pupils and staff and any visitors to the class.
- Participate in school activities

## **Playground Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Obey the adult who is supervising the yard.
- Stay in designated areas of the yard at break time and lunch time.
- Avoid rough play, keep the yard litter free.
- Be responsible for their own property – lunch box and items of clothing.
- Respect the property of others and do not damage it or take it without permission.
- Treat all school property and furniture with care.
- Only enter the school building at break time or lunch time to use the toilet, having sought adult permission.
- When the first bell rings, all pupils stop the activity which they are doing. When the bell rings for the second time walk and line up quietly in class designated areas.
- Remain on the school grounds during school time, unless permission is given by the class teacher/principal to do otherwise.

## **Behaviour in other School Areas**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Walk in the school corridors
- Cooperate with the teachers and be polite to visitors to the school
- Take responsibility for their actions.
- Be in her class on time.
- Not to bring glass bottles, cans or tippex nor mobile phones to school.

## **Behaviour during School Outings/Activities**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow her teacher's and supporting adults' directions at all times.
  - Remain with the teacher/supervisors and class group of pupils/and/or designated adult at all times.
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- Behave politely towards those they meet on such trips.
- Observe the rules of general good behaviour

## **Staff**

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Whole school assemblies are held at the beginning of each academic year to facilitate revision and consolidation of the school rules with pupils.

The schools SPHE (Social, Personal, health Education) curriculum is used to support the Code of Behavior and implemented according to the SPHE policy in the school. It aims to help our pupils develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and develop conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and citizenship. Activities scheduled to develop these skills include Circle Time, drama, role-play, class discussions, whole school assemblies.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class.

They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age-appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Agree a set of classroom rules with the pupils.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

## **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

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Our school encourages positive working relationships with parents in the best interest of their child. Open communication between parents and teachers is welcome and achieved as follows: parents are encouraged to make an appointment, as early as possible, to speak with the class teacher if concerns arise and visa versa. Should a parent(s) have a complaint regarding a teacher they will be reminded of the correct procedure to follow at the start of each academic year.

## **PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

As a general rule the school will endeavor to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward.

- School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.
- Pupils' work is publicly displayed and celebrated.
- Various reward systems are implemented at different class levels including star charts, certificates, pupil of the week certificates, positive notes home or verbal communication with the parents acknowledging improvements or achievements, edible reinforcements, positive sensory experiences (video time, circle time), activity reinforcement.
- School newsletters are distributed periodically by email to all families outlining various activities and achievements of pupils.
- Providing a stimulating and supportive learning environment to promote positive behavior including music, dance, camogie, annual Christmas carol services / concerts, art, sports week, school tours, nature walks, library visits. These will be reviewed and reformed as deemed necessary.

## **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the supportive interventions and disciplinary actions that will be employed.

### **Level One**

#### ***Level 1 Behaviours***

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers.
  - Running in the hallways.
  - Disturbing the work or play of others.
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- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner.
- Ignoring staff requests.

### ***Level 1 Disciplinary Actions***

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s).
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behavior. Advising on how to improve behavior.
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others. This must happen within the classroom.
- Time Out within the classroom
- Loss of privileges.
- Class teacher communicates concern to the parent either orally or through the homework journal, asking the parent/guardian to talk to the child and remind her of the importance of keeping school rules.
- Behaviour contract.

### ***Level 1 Supportive Actions***

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Open Circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members).
- Discussion of behaviour with the child.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date must be documented each day and recorded. This information would be useful should a problem persist.
- A target chart may be drawn up, setting positive individual targets for the child to meet. Parents/Guardians will be notified so that they can support the child.
- If misbehavior persists, a meeting with the parent/guardian will be requested and arranged. The Principal may attend this meeting. A plan will be drawn up to help the child improve their behaviour. The child's behaviour will be monitored.

## **Level Two**

### **Level 2 Behaviours**

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Level 2 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting).
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing.
- Cheating.
- Use of profanity.
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin.
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward another pupil/ adult.
- Possession or use of dangerous sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.).

### ***Level 2 Disciplinary Actions***

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses that may be used:

- Implementation of extensive Behaviour management plan.
- In school supervised detention.
- Report submitted to the Board of Management.
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour.

### ***Level 2 Supportive Actions***

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal or Principal.
  - Request for assistance from external agencies such as the 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, Túsla
  - Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).
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## **Level Three**

### ***Level 3 Behaviours***

- Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal wellbeing of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.
- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires.
- Intentional possession or use of weapons.
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability or ethnic origin.

### ***Level 3 Disciplinary Actions***

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

#### Suspension from school for one to five days:

This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

#### Suspension from school for five to ten days:

This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

#### Expulsion:

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

Factors influencing children's behavior may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated especially with SEN pupils. Each SEN pupil will have a support plan and included in this will be targets and strategies to cater for their behavioural needs.

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## **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS**

### **Suspension**

Definition of Suspension:

*'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'*

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

#### **Authority to Suspend:**

The Board of Management of the Convent Primary School has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an 'Immediate Suspension' to the Principal Teacher. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

A full report will be provided to the Board of Management following any incident that warranted a suspension.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

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## Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school.

An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of the *Convent Primary School*, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- or
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

1. The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
  2. The reasons for the suspension.
  3. Any study programme to be followed.
  4. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
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The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension.
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of the *Convent Primary School* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given:

***No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.***

#### **Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:**

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of the *Convent Primary School* will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of the *Convent Primary School* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

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- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- The duration 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

## **Expulsion**

### **Definition of Expulsion:**

*'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.'*

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

### **Authority to Expel:**

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

### **Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

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- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required).

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s):

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond

a) The Principal (or BOM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parent(s)/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 parent(s)/guardian(s).

b) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- As to the date, location and time of the hearing.
- Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- That they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing.

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

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In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.
- The Principal (or BOM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence.
- Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose.

c) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

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 by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.
- Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted.
- Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely 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 pupils or staff.

d) 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 will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of the Convent Primary School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the
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organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.

- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.