

Bohermore National School – Code of Behaviour

Introduction

The Code of Behaviour for Bohermore National School has been reviewed by the staff of Bohermore N.S. and discussed with and ratified by the Board of Management.

Bohermore National School plays a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As Bohermore is a small community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and for them to develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences. Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Mission Statement

Our vision is to develop well rounded, confident individuals who aspire to achieve their full potential. We do this by providing a welcoming, happy, safe nurturing environment (that promotes social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth) where each child is known and valued, where differing needs are acknowledged, respected and met and all achievements are celebrated.

We believe a happy child is a child who will learn. Therefore, we are committed to providing a positive and stimulating environment for children to enjoy learning, achieve their potential and become independent life-long learners.

We aim to encourage each child to be independent and develop a sense of responsibility for

themselves and respect for others and the environment we live in.

The staff of our school work in partnership with our families and the wider community to foster respect for all, including ourselves, to celebrate diversity and embrace challenge.

Aims of the Code of Behaviour:

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour, which allows the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To promote self-esteem and self-motivation.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- 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 and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify “*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*”.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour and that the principal will “as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child”.

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate (*Table A from Anti-Bullying Procedure for Primary & Post Primary Schools*)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Strategies/Incentives to Promote Positive Behaviour

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment of praise on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent/guardian.
- Praise at assembly, in the yard or other communal events.
- On an individual basis, when the need arises, an individual encouragement chart will be utilised for children.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that the children with special needs will require more assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with the parents/guardians and the official class teacher, learning support/resource teacher and the Principal who will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from services will be sought if necessary.

Restorative Practice:

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. "Reflection Sheets" are used in this situation.

The climate of the school is one of connection where reflection and a solution focused approach are embedded. It focuses on the harm done rather than only on the rule broken. It gives a voice to the harmed and it allows for collaborative problem solving.



Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

School Rules

Each pupil is expected:

- To have respect for one's self and others
- To have respect for other's property
- To respect other students, not interfere with their learning
- To be kind and willing to help others
- To follow instructions from staff immediately
- To be courteous and well mannered.
- To use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- To ask permission to leave the classroom
- To do ones best in class
- To take responsibility for one's own work

Behaviour in class:

Pupils are expected to:

- Show courtesy and respect for others in order to ensure a safe, happy and secure working environment.
- Co-operate fully with instructions given by the teacher.
- Respect the SNA in the class and give them the same respect as given to the teacher.
- Complete, to the best of their ability, oral and/or written work assigned to them in school and/or for homework.
- Leave and return to classrooms in an orderly fashion.
- Bring all required books, copies and materials to school and home each day.
- Keep their own area, and the classroom, neat and tidy at all times.
- Remain seated and quiet in the event of the teacher having to leave the classroom.
- Treat the property of the school and other pupils with respect.

- Wear the uniform each day.

Behaviour in Yard & School Environment:

- Pupils must accept the authority of all staff members.
- For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents pupils will move about the school in an orderly fashion.
- Boisterous behaviour, rough play and dangerous games are prohibited.
- Pupils must remain within the designated area of the yard for their class groupings during break times.
- Permission must be sought to re-enter school buildings from supervising teachers.
- Pupils must keep playgrounds litter free.
- When the bell rings at the end of breaks, children must walk in an orderly fashion to their line.
- At break times on wet days, pupils must remain seated in their classrooms and play safely.

Good behaviour will be praised and rewarded. Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

Defining Inappropriate Behaviours

Behaviour can be divided into Minor, Serious and Gross Misconduct. As behaviour is subjective, it is difficult to define which behaviour fits into which definition. For example, age, areas of need, intention, etc. are factors that can influence whether a behaviour is deemed serious or minor. Therefore, the following list is not exhaustive and may overlap into other definitions. In all cases, the teacher (and/or principal) will have the right to define a behaviour based on their own professional judgement.

Minor Misbehaviour

Minor misbehaviours are simply defined as any breakage of the rules as defined above. These behaviours are dealt with by staff in the school and parents are generally not informed of these sanctions. The rules apply at all times in the school, including yard breaks. All staff can implement sanctions. While generally these behaviours warrant warnings or a loss of playtime, a “cooling off” period may also be implemented, such as time out of yard or class. In some cases, a child may require an individual behaviour plan.

Serious Misbehaviour

Serious misbehaviour is difficult to define. It is more serious than minor misconduct but not in the realm of gross misconduct. It would include:

- persistently breaking the rules in the school but is not limited to this.
- Examples may include:
 - spitting
 - throwing things
 - bad/derogatory language
 - persistently not following instructions
 - leaving the school premises without permission
 - behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
 - damage to property, school or another individual's
 - theft
 - Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
 - threats or physical hurt to another person,

though this list is not exhaustive. The school has the right to define a behaviour as “serious” based on the individual child. However, serious misbehaviour will always involve a meeting or talk with parents. In some cases, a child may require an individual behaviour plan.

Gross Misconduct

Gross Misconduct may be defined as extremely serious behaviour. Gross misconduct may warrant immediate suspension and/or expulsion from the school. The principal of the school will be involved of any behaviour considered gross misconduct and it will be at his/her discretion what sanction must be implemented. In some cases, the school's Board of Management must be involved, (see below).

The following list of behaviours are considered Gross Misconduct and may warrant immediate suspension/expulsion. However, the list is not exhaustive and it is the right of the principal to define any behaviour not listed below as Gross Misconduct.

- Acts of intentional Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) to a staff member and/or child. It is important to note that the school will decide whether an incident comes under this definition. This behaviour goes far beyond jostling on the yard.
- Intentional theft of item of value, e.g. money, jewelry, electronic devices, items of a highly personal nature, etc.
- Intimidation of a child and/or a staff member by a child.
- Possession of a weapon on school property. A weapon is defined as any implement or tool that is utilised or intended to utilise harm to another individual. Examples include, knives (including pen knives), guns, screwdrivers, etc. However, any item can be used as a weapon and it is generally the intention that will be examined when considering this behaviour.
- Any form of intentional sexual harassment.
- Wilful destruction of school property.
- Suspension may be used as part of an individual behaviour plan. However, this will only be utilised after a plan is implemented and agreed by parents, child and teacher along with the principal.

This list is not exhaustive and other incidents may be considered as gross misconducts at the discretion of the principal and Board of Management.

Procedure to Deal with Misbehaviour

It is important the children know that it is the behaviour, not the child, which is being reprimanded. Sanctions are necessary to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour and to help children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Sanctions Implemented in Cases of Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age, emotional development and special needs of the child. They may include:

- Reasoning with the pupil.
- Verbal reprimand by class teacher including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
- Prescribing extra work/ supervised detention during break
- Loss of privileges.
- Communication with parents/guardians at an early stage by class teacher and or by the principal
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet with the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period of time. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with the teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education

Welfare Act. In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board of Management may authorise the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

‘Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort.’ (Circular 20/90).

- The individual teacher may wish to tell parents about any behaviour at any time.
- Usually it is best if parents are contacted by the class teacher. However, in cases of serious misconduct, the principal teacher may be asked to join in a discussion with parents.
- When parents are invited to the school, they should be put at their ease in order to maximise a co-operative approach.
- The child should not be present for the meeting unless requested by the teacher.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns. They should arrange to meet teachers outside of school time so as not to affect children’s education.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

- Some children may display aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Serious emotional and behavioural problems will be dealt with in conjunction with parents. A supplemented behaviour plan will be made with parents so that consequences for good and bad behaviour are replicated at home and at school.
- Children who have emotional disturbances may be referred for psychological assessment.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, etc.
- Professional development is made available to staff, e.g. SESS, Colleges of Education, ICEP (ProfExcel) courses, Education Centres.
- If the school proposes to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, Managing Challenging Behaviour - Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004: 11 will be read and competent legal advice will be sought.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school must take extra steps e.g.
- The child is sent home for the rest of the day (or for a number of days until agreement of appropriate behaviour is accepted by child and parents)
- Temporary exclusion while consultation with SENO and/or EWO takes place about appropriate resourcing, alternative placement

Suspension / Expulsion procedures

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify... ‘the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned’ and “the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.”(Sections 23(2) c, d)

Suspension

The principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days. (Sections 21(4) a)

Circular 20/90 states that ‘Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated’.

The school’s procedure in relation to suspension and expulsion require the following steps to be taken:

- When a child reaches the stage of serious/gross misconduct (outlined above) occurs, a child may be temporarily excluded from school.
- The Board of Management will authorise either the Principal or the Chairperson to exclude a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.
- This will only occur if procedures were followed to ensure fairness when excluding a pupil and the following criteria have been acknowledged:
 - Have all other means of dealing with the behaviour been tried?
 - Has there been previous communication with parents regarding misbehaviour?
 - Are parents invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude?
 - Has a fair investigation taken place, taking parents’ and pupil’s perspective into account?
 - If the BoM is likely to reach a decision to exclude a pupil, how will it ensure the decision will be reached in an unbiased manner? c/f NEWB Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour
 - What facility is there to allow a pupil return to school before the period of suspension is over? (Section 23(2)d)

- In certain cases, suspension will have to occur without exploring other avenues in some cases of Gross Misconduct.
- If a child is to be temporarily excluded from school, a letter is sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) signed by the principal and/or Chairperson. This letter outlines the dates where the child has been excluded from class and is stored in his/her permanent record.
- When the period of suspension is over, the pupil, parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff are expected that the incident is not used to “pigeon-hole” the child. He/she should come back to school on a “clean sheet”.
- If a period of suspension in excess of three days is intended, a special decision of the Board of Management is required. This decision can be made by the Chairperson of the Board.
- Where a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days, the National Education Welfare Board is notified using the standard form. Forms are available on www.newb.ie

Removal of Suspension

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parents/guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code. The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

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))

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) 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 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 are given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms if they wish to appeal a decision.
- The chairperson of the Board of Management 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)

Who are the Stakeholders?

The children, staff, parents, Board of Management, Parent's Council and the wider community.

Behaviour of other Stakeholders in the School

Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, all adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

The Department of Education outline the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other staff through the Education Act and relevant circulars, and they are answerable to the school's Board of Management for any form of unacceptable behaviour through the relevant legislation and circulars. Staff of the school who feel that the behaviour of their colleagues towards them is undesirable should follow the Working Together Guidelines as found on the INTO web site:

<http://www.into.ie/ROI/InformationforTeachers/StaffRelations/WorkingTogether/Downloads/WorkingTogether.pdf>

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples are below but this is not an exhaustive list:

- All stakeholders should speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays aggression in the school, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called.
- In line with the Child Protection Policy, stakeholders should never approach a child in an aggressive manner. Incidents like these are taken very seriously. No matter how justified someone feels about approaching a child in this manner, the child will instantly be removed from the situation for his/her own safety.
- All meetings with teachers and other staff members should be conducted with a view to resolving a particular situation in line with the school complaints' procedures. Walking out of the room or other forms of antagonistic behaviour are unacceptable.
- Violence, physical or emotional, will not be tolerated. The Gardaí may become involved in any incident of violence between two parties.
- Staff will only speak about a child to his/her parent/guardian. A common experience for schools occurs when a parent asks a teacher about a punishment to a child who may have affected their own child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy.
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected. If not, the principal/teacher or chairperson has the right to terminate the meeting.
- In line with our ethos, stakeholders should not interrupt class time. Should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made in the office or with the teacher. This ensures that issues can be resolved in a planned way. Classes begin at 9:10am and finish at 2:50pm (1:50pm for infants) and this time should not be interrupted.

- Stakeholders should not isolate or attempt to influence others against particular individuals or groups in the school.
- At all times, adults in the school should model the school's own behaviour system for children.

Stakeholders who fail to respect the rules above will be subject to action from the Board of Management. In some cases, stakeholders may be asked to leave the building and in serious cases, the Board may take legal action and/or ban a stakeholder from the school building.

Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, all records of serious behaviour are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour in their permanent file. Records are written in a factual and impartial manner.

Records of children who do not keep the rules need not be permanently stored but it is recommended that the individual teacher keeps note of any behavioural issue in the classroom or playground.

Role of Parents

Having a good working relationship between the school and parents is central to maintaining a consistent and positive approach to dealing with children. A lot of time and consideration has been given to drawing up this Code of Behaviour. Enrolment is dependent on acceptance of this policy.

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school (teachers, SNAs & parents) have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with all members of staff, as their example has an important influence on the children. We should ensure fair treatment of all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability and show appreciation for the efforts and contribution of all.

Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated in any form. Students are encouraged to report incidents of intimidation, harassment, isolation, name-calling, threats etc to their class teacher, yard supervisor or the Principal if an unpleasant incident occurs. See the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The definition of bullying is quite clear:

“Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.” (Department of Education, 1990)

In summary, bullying is **sustained, prolonged** and **targeted** behaviour towards an individual or group. Bullying has a pattern and isolated incidents over a long period of time do not constitute the term “bullying.” Bullying is a very strong term to use and should not be confused with inappropriate behaviour.

When a child feels they are being bullied, the school will investigate this. If the school defines the behaviours as bullying, the Anti-bullying policy will be implemented. In other cases, this policy will be implemented.

Absences

In keeping with NEWB guidelines in relation to Codes of Behaviour (2008: chapters 10/11/12) parents/guardians are asked to take note that an explanatory note is required for all absences which will be kept in school records as schools are obliged by law to notify absences of twenty days and over in any school year together with the reasons for those absences to the Education Welfare Board (Education Welfare Act 2000).

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9.10 a.m. A verbal or a written explanation is required from parents/guardians when children are late. No responsibility can be accepted by school staff or management for children who are on the school premises before 9.00 a.m. or after the official closing time of 1.50 p.m. (infant classes) and 2.50 p.m. (senior classes).

No child is permitted to leave the school premises at any time without the written consent of a parent/guardian and the signing of the early departures/late arrivals book by the parent.

Implementation and Circulation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents. It is reviewed regularly and all members of the school community will be informed of any changes. The policy is available publicly at the school and will be circulated to all parents. Any changes will be ratified by the Board of Management and dated.

- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signature_____

Chairperson of Board of Management
Bohermore National School

Reviewed By: _____

Date: _____