

Scoil Bhríde, Mountrath Code of Behaviour / Discipline Policy

The existing Code of Behaviour was reviewed by the teaching staff of Scoil Bhríde in accordance with the NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' 2008 and in the spirit of the INTO booklet 'Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools'. It was further reviewed at a Staff Meeting on 6th September 2023.

Introduction

The main aim of having a Code of Discipline in our school is that life in school, in the classroom and at play may be pleasant for all children and for those who care for them during school hours.

Discipline is necessary in all areas of life, and, as education is a preparation for life, we will encourage children to discipline themselves from the earliest age. We will do this by encouraging them to finish all tasks begun, making them aware of the rules of the school and helping them to see and understand that rules are necessary for the smooth running of the school, by helping them to see and understand the value of silence at times, and of listening to their teacher, and to one another.

We will encourage them to carry out duties that have been assigned to them as a group or a class, and, on our part, we will show that we appreciate their help and co-operation.

As teachers, we will try to be on one word about the rules to be kept, and realise that a busy child is rarely a disruptive child. All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. Each child will be treated fairly, in accordance with our Equality policy. We will also take the age of the child and the home situation into consideration when making demands of children.

As parents are the primary educators of their children, we will work with parents for the good of their child. As teachers we will help one another by passing on useful information when transferring classes.

Aims

- In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
- The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school.
- The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by the teachers.

Principles:

- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to acknowledge these differences.
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.

Communication with Parents:

We endeavour to use a whole school approach in the development of home/school relationships. We as staff consider communication with parents to be of vital importance. We endeavour to establish strong links between parents and teachers and to encourage a high level of parental involvement in the education of their own children. We hope to promote a partnership which emphasises that the parent is the child's principal educator, and that the parents' relationship with the teacher is one in which the respective roles are equal and complementary.

We wish to create a working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, (e.g. health problems, family problems), responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationship with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that the parents are kept well-informed and that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents. Should communication with parents regarding misbehaviour be deemed appropriate, it may be by telephone, writing, or formal meeting, depending on circumstances. Parents are welcome to ring the school / email the class teacher or Principal to make an appointment at any time.

Parental communication with teachers

Parents are expected to provide written explanations to the class teacher if the child is absent or late, has to leave the school during school hours, or is being collected early. Particularly in the junior classes, if the child is being collected by someone other than the parent/guardian, notification should also be given.

Under the Educational Welfare Act 2000, the National Education Welfare Board must be notified if a pupil is absent for a total of twenty days or more in a school year. Therefore, even if the teachers know why the child is absent, it is extremely important that all absences are explained with a written note which is signed and dated.

Uniform

All pupils of Scoil Bhríde are expected to wear the school uniform, unless specific permission otherwise is given. The uniform consists of a white blouse, red tie, navy skirt/pinafore and red jumper/cardigan. School socks or tights may be red, white or navy. Children should wear low heeled shoes. Slippers or canvas shoes must be worn indoors.

The PE uniform, which is only to be worn on specified PE days, consists of any navy tracksuit bottoms, red, white or navy polo shirt and a red or navy sweat shirt. Appropriate runners must be worn at all times for PE.

If for any reason children are unable to wear the required uniform on a particular day, parents are expected to provide the class teacher with a note of explanation.

Homework:

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. Parents are strongly advised to take an active interest in their child's homework and to sign their homework journal each night (ensuring that it is done), or to write explanation if the homework cannot be completed.

Clár ama na Scoile:

School begins: 9.20 a.m.

School closes: Infants: 2.00 p.m.

Seniors: 3.00 p.m.

Parents will be informed of changes to these times (e.g. school tour days) by email. The school yard is supervised from 9.10am.

Individual Differences:

We recognise that a variety of differences exist between children, and make all efforts to understand individual differences and experiences when we are dealing with incidents of misbehaviour. The sanctions outlined below will contain a degree of flexibility to take account of individual circumstances. In cases of serious and repeated misbehaviour, help will be sought where appropriate, from support services within the wider community.

School Rules for the children:

The following are the general rules in operation in the school. Pupils may be involved, as appropriate in devising rules specific to their own classrooms.

My own safety:

- I should always follow the instructions of the teachers, and remain in the areas designated at all times, as these instructions are issued for my own safety and well-being,
- I should be careful coming to and going from school, and throughout the day. In particular, I should avoid swinging on posts, railings or walking on the wall.
- I should always walk while in the school building and remain seated when instructed to do so and while eating lunch.
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher, and bring a note of explanation following absences which is signed and dated.
- I understand that I am expected to take responsibility for my own safety and behave in a sensible manner.
- I am aware that if I need to contact home I will be allowed to use the school phone, as mobile phones are strictly forbidden.

Caring for myself:

- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.
- I should respect myself, my property and the property of the school.
- I should always keep my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day.
- I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- I understand that wearing fake tan / make up is not permitted in school.
- I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, fizzy drinks, or chewing gum are not permitted.
- I should always be in school when the bell rings at 9.20 a.m.

Caring for others:

- I should always show respect for, kindness to, and inclusion of my fellow pupils, teachers and all members of the school community. Using nicknames, vulgar language or spoiling games organised by others will not be tolerated.
- I should refrain from behaviours that interfere with my own learning and that of others.
- I should be truthful and honest at all times in my interaction with others, and own up promptly if I have misbehaved.
- I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds, and the local area, in accordance with our Green Code.

Bullying:

- *“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 definition).
- Bullying is always unacceptable and incidents of bullying are treated very seriously.
- Our Anti-Bullying Policy discusses this issue in detail.

Strategies:***Praise:***

We recognise the value of praising and reinforcing positive behaviour. A variety of methods are used to praise and reward children, at the discretion of each teacher and depending on the age of the children etc. These may include: a quiet word or gesture to show approval, a comment in a pupil’s exercise book, a visit to another member of Staff for commendation, a system of merit marks, a mention to parent, written or verbal communication, Golden Time etc.

Disapproval:***Unacceptable behaviour may be dealt with as follows:***

- Reasoning with pupils
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Temporary separation from peers
- Loss of privileges

- Noting of incidents in anecdotal records.
- Referral to other staff member.
- Communication with parents.
- At times requesting letter of apology / written reinforcement of rule.

Procedures:

The minor, serious and gross misbehaviours listed below are provided as examples and should not be read as comprehensive or complete lists.

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common-sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours as follows:

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Interrupting class work
- Not completing homework without good reason
- Running in school building
- Leaving designated areas without permission
- Leaving seat without permission
- Not lining up when bell rings
- Leaving litter around school
- Not wearing correct uniform
- Frequently arriving late for school
- Using unacceptable language

Dealing with occurrences of minor misdemeanours:

Minor misdemeanours will be dealt with at the discretion of the relevant teacher, as outlined above.

Examples of serious misdemeanours:

- Repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Damaging other pupil's property / property of the school
- Bullying
- Hurting a fellow pupil
- Serious disrespect or discourtesy to members of school community
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Endangering self/fellow pupils.

Examples of steps that may be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:

- The relevant teacher investigates and records reports of serious misbehaviour.
- A sanction or combination of the sanctions listed above may be implemented by the relevant teacher.
- The child may be sent to another staff member / Deputy Principal /Principal for reprimand.

- Class teacher / Deputy Principal/ Principal may meet with one/both parents/guardians.
- If it remains unresolved, the chairperson of the Board of Management may be informed and he will proceed in accordance with Board of Management procedures.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:

- Repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour.
- Bringing weapons to school
- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps running / fire hose turned on.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher / pupil.
- Sale or supply of illegal substances.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours:

- We endeavour to follow at all times the requirements of fair procedures – the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.
- The principal has been authorised by the Board of Management to sanction immediate suspension of a pupil for up to three days if the behaviour is judged to be a danger to any member of the school community, and a formal investigation will commence after the suspension is imposed. Parents will immediately be informed and arrangements made for the student to be collected.
- In other cases, where the behaviour appears serious enough to warrant suspension, but there is no apparent immediate danger to anyone's safety, the behaviour will be thoroughly investigated, parents and student will be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond, before the suspension is imposed.
- Expulsion will be considered in extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 i.e. "No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality", and as amended by the National Welfare Education Act, 2000.

- **In all cases, the requirements of the National Welfare Education Act 2000, and the 'NEWB Guidelines for Schools for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008)' will be followed, and should there be any contradiction between this policy and the guidelines, the guidelines, or other relevant legal requirements, will supersede this policy.**

Ratified by Board of Management on:

Signed:

