

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

### **Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa**

This Code of Behaviour was devised by the the school community. It is revised and updated as required. This updated version was ratified by the Board of Management on 16/11/2021.

#### **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa**

According to our mission statement, Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa strives to provide a type of schooling for each child, to enable him/her to reach their full potential, academically, spiritually, socially and physically. This is done in a secure and positive atmosphere, having regard to the Christian ethos of the school and respect for the varied ethos of other denominations.

We are committed to creating an environment in which each individual child and adult feels valued, respected and safe.

We take pride in the high standards of behaviour and in the good manners which are to be found in our school, and we know that this depends on the example set by us all. We treat everyone as an individual. Each member of our school family can expect to give and receive respect. Good manners are usually caught, not taught.

We also believe that relationships are vital – relationships between everyone and at every level. Each member of our school community must be prepared to take the initiative:

- Greet and be greeted.
- Speak and be spoken to.
- Smile and relate.
- Communicate.

The aims and objectives of our Code of Discipline are:

- To promote the Gaelscoil ethos throughout the school.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- 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.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

#### **Standards of Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Speak Irish at all times in the school environment and when representing the school outside.
- Make no unnecessary physical contact.
- Be gentle and not hurt anybody.
- Listen to others and not interrupt when they are speaking.
- Work diligently to the best of their ability.
- Respect school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- Be honest and truthful.
- Follow the teacher's direction at all times.
- Obtain the teacher's permission to leave the classroom.
- Show respect for their teachers, all staff members, other pupils and visitors to the school.
- Wear the school uniform.

### **Playground Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Speak Irish to the best of their ability.
- Play in a safe manner, avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact.
- Follow the directions of the playground supervisors.
- Obtain permission before re-entering school building during break periods.
- Show respect for fellow pupils and all adults in the yard, at all times.
- Abstain from swearing, shouting, fighting, name calling, rude gestures etc.
- Play with pupils in the same class group.
- Play within designated areas in yard.

### **Behaviour on Entering and Exiting the School**

- In the interest of health and safety, parents and children are to enter and exit the school premises **only** by the designated pathway for their particular class.
- When exiting the school, pupils are expected to walk out in an orderly fashion, without pushing, running or shouting.

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

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow his/her teacher's instructions at all times.
- Remain with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times.
- Behave politely towards those they meet on such trips.
- Wear the school uniform / tracksuit as directed by teacher.
- Observe the rules of general good behaviour.

The expected behaviours shall be referred to on an ongoing basis in classrooms and shall be displayed in public areas in the school.

### **Staff Responsibility**

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the schools Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is fair and consistent. However, each member of staff has a responsibility towards maintaining discipline within the school environment.

Teaching staff are responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. It is their duty to:

- Draw up appropriate classroom rules at the beginning of each school year.
- Ensure that 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.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour are being recorded.
- Report instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibility**

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children, which produce positive behaviour in school.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Ensure that their children attend school and are punctual.
- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full school uniform.
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff and encourage their children likewise.
- Encourage their children to abide by the school rules.
- Respect school policies, and abide by them.
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same.
- Label pupil's coats and other personal property.
- Strictly supervise pre-school children, when on the school grounds.

Parents/guardians who may have concerns regarding any aspect of their child's behaviour or other issues pertaining to their child's school life, are welcome to make an appointment through the office to discuss their concerns.

As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and pupils, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

Where there is an ongoing pattern of misbehaviour, the parent/guardian will be expected to participate in the intervention process.

### **Strategies for Promoting and Rewarding Good Behaviour**

Pupils who are respectful and strive to do their best will be given due recognition within the school system. The school will endeavour to create an atmosphere where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and recognition.

- Constant reinforcement of classroom, yard and school rules.
- Resilience promoting programmes eg. Roots of Empathy, Get Up Stand Up, Zippy's Friends, SPHE Programmes.
- Affirmation – regular teacher praise and encouragement.
- Scoláire na Seachtaine from each class each week.
- The class with most ticks for standing in their line get extra play time each week.
- A positive comment in the Dialann Obair Bhaile.
- A visit to another staff member for commendation.
- A positive visit to the Principal's office.
- A positive telephone call to parents.
- Class groups receive rewards decided by class teacher, as appropriate.
- Use of proximal praise.

### **Procedures for dealing with Misbehaviour**

It is only when the standards we set are not observed that the structured system of discipline and sanction are imposed. Sanctions will be imposed in the event of unacceptable misbehaviour. The nature and gravity of the misbehaviour will determine the appropriateness of the sanction. Such sanctions will take the pupils age and needs into consideration, and will contain a degree of flexibility, considering the individual circumstances.

In dealing with misbehaviours, teachers will endeavour to provide a uniform, consistent approach.

Realising that good behaviour is of vital importance within the Gaelscoil community, and being aware that we lead by example, the pupils are given ample opportunity to improve their behaviour. Before sanctions are imposed, pupils will be given a considerate hearing in a secure atmosphere.

### **Categories of Misbehaviours**

#### **Level One**

These are behaviours that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom and common areas.

Pupils learn through their mistakes. Bearing this in mind, 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.

Examples of Misbehaviour in Level 1:

- Refusal to speak Irish to the best of their ability.
- Failure to prepare for class, to the best of one's ability.
- Disturbing the work or play of others.
- Disrespectful language, tone, manner or gesture.
- Noncompliance with staff requests.

- Non co-operation with routine.
- Refusal to wear the school uniform without appropriate excuse.

### **Level One Disciplinary Actions**

Consequences for misbehaviour at this level are dependent upon the frequency and severity of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline pupils at Level 1:

- Verbal reminders/reprimands.
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour.
- Temporary separation from peers, friends, others eg. Standing to the side during Yard Time.
- Prescribing additional work.
- Withdrawal of privileges e.g. class activity.
- Note to parents, signed, returned and retained by class teacher.

### **Level One – Supportive Interventions**

- Classroom based interventions – revision of classroom/playground rules.
- Discussion of behaviour with child.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

### **Level Two**

#### **Level Two - Behaviours**

Level Two Misbehaviours are those that are considered to seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of students and staff. Some examples of Level Two behaviours are:

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviours which have not been modified by intervention.
- Behaviour that is dangerous to self and others – hitting, punching, biting.
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing.
- Cheating.
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, religion, physical appearance, disability or ethnic origin.
- Disrespectful language or behaviour towards others.
- Possession or use of dangerous implements.
- Use of camera/phone etc without permission. Phones are not allowed under any circumstances in the classroom or on school outings and must be left in the office in the morning to be collected at home time if the child requires it after school.

#### **Level Two Disciplinary Actions**

The disciplinary actions taken at Level Two are dependent on the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. The disciplinary actions are taken by the Principal. Responses to Level 2 behaviours include:

1. Principal is informed – formal record of complaint is put on file.
2. Teacher informs parent/guardian, and seeks a meeting to discuss matter.
3. Teacher meets parents/guardians.

4. Implementation of appropriate Behaviour Management Plan as deemed appropriate by teacher.
5. Parents are requested to give an undertaking in writing to the Principal and class teacher that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in future. This will be signed by child, parent/guardian, teacher, Principal and will be kept in the child's file.
6. Chairperson of the Board of Management may be informed.
7. Parents may be requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal.
8. Cumulative incidents of serious misbehaviours may be considered as gross and may result in suspension or expulsion.

### **Level Two – Supportive Interventions**

- Team Conference to include Principal, Classroom Teacher, other involved staff.
- Request advice from external agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive and the *National Educational Welfare Board*.

### **Level Three**

#### **Level Three – Behaviours**

Level Three Misbehaviours 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 Three.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level Two behaviour which has not been deemed to be modified by intervention.
- Repeated instances of fighting or intentionally causing physical harm or upset to others.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group, involving race, religion, physical condition, special educational need, ethnic origin, gender identification or sexual orientation.
- Causing criminal damage to school property or to property of others within the school community.

#### **Level Three – Disciplinary Actions**

Level Three Misbehaviours may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend on 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 Three responses:

- Suspension from school for one to five days. This response will occur with the first incidence of Level Three behaviour. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- Suspension from school for five to ten days. This response occurs with the repeated incidence of Level Three behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.
- Expulsion. Repeated incidents of Level Three behaviours can result in a pupil being expelled.

## **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

### **Suspension**

Definition of suspension:

“Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school day.” (Developing a Code of Behaviour – NEWB)

### **Authority to Suspend**

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa has delegated the authority to impose an ‘Immediate Suspension’ to the Principal Teacher.

### **Immediate and Automatic Suspension**

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

An Automatic Suspension is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management, having given due consideration to its’ duty of care as prescribed by Health and Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur Automatic Suspension.

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or a member of staff.
- Serious damage to school property.
- Any behaviour involving the use of dangerous or illegal implements or substances.

Parents/guardians will be informed of an Immediate Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them to collect the pupil. Under no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent/guardian being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue no later than two days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension begins and ends.
- The reason for the suspension.
- Study programme of work to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent/guardian.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES (Ed. Act 1998, Section 29), where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to 20.

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 two school days following 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 recurrence of such misconduct.

### **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 Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed:

A written letter containing the following information will issue to the parent(s)/guardian(s):

1. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
2. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled not 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.

If, following a fair and impartial investigation, the Board of Management makes the decision to suspend, written notification shall be provided 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 programme of study 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 a pupil is suspended in the current 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 Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

After the suspension ends:

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parent(s)/guardians(s) about the suspension. The school will make every effort to successfully re-integrate the pupil into the school. This may include helping the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. As successful re-integration goes beyond academic work, where possible, a staff member or SCP Project Worker, shall in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s), offer support to the student during the re-integration process.

### **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, NEWB)

### **Authority to Expel**

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management. The sanction of expulsion will only be used in extremely exceptional circumstances, when all other avenues have been exhausted.

Grounds for Expulsion:

- 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 the safety of fellow pupils and/or staff.
- The pupil is responsible for very serious damage to property.
- Supplying illegal drugs.
- Sexual assault.

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

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

#### **1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.**

- As part of the investigation a letter containing the following information will issue to the parent(s)/guardian(s):
- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process and notification that the allegation could lead to expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond.

#### **2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal:**

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted. The Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. In this event, the Principal will:

- Inform the parents and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure the parents/guardians have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents/guardians.

#### **3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal’s recommendation and 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 time, date and location of the hearing

- of their right to make a written or oral submission to the Board
- 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. 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 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

After both sides have been heard, the Board shall ensure that the Principal and parents/guardians are not present for the Board's deliberations.

#### **4. Board of Management Deliberations and Actions following the Hearing:**

Where the Board, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board:

- Will notify the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) in writing, 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 EWO receives this written notification
- Will, in writing, notify the parents/guardians of their decision and inform them that the EWO is being contacted
- Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the EWO
- Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

#### **5. Confirmation of the Decision to Expel**

Where the 20 day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board 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 DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa 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 implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process
- The person involved in the investigation process will on presentation of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

**During the current COVID-19 crisis, we all have a responsibility to keep each other safe and well. In order to do so, we have high expectations of our students to follow the rules and guidelines of the school related to;**

- Following any altered routines for arrival or departure
- Following school instructions on hygiene, such as handwashing and sanitising
- Following instructions on who pupils can socialise with at school
- Moving around the school following specific instructions (for example, one-way systems, out of bounds areas, queuing, lunch routines)
- Expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- Telling an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- Rules about sharing any equipment or other items including drinking bottles
- Amended expectations about break and play time, including where children may or may not play
- Use of toilet facilities

Failure to follow the rules relating to the school's Covid Response Plan will be dealt with under this Code of Behaviour.

#### **Recording:**

A recording system will be used to record pupil misbehaviour.

This record will include:

- Incidents of misbehaviour
- Interventions used to improve behaviour, contact with parents/guardians/other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Sanctions imposed and reasons why they were imposed
- Pupils are made aware that incidences of misbehaviour are being recorded and an explanation of why is given
- The provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act (Amendment) 2003 are adhered to.

#### **Success Criteria:**

- Positive feedback from teachers, parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils
- Staff observation in classrooms, corridors and in the school yard

#### **RATIFICATION:**

This policy was communicated ratified by the Board of Management of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa on **16/11/2021**.

**Denis Bohane**

**Cathaoirleach, Bord Bainistíochta**

**Máire Ní Nuanáin**

**Príomhoide**