Coinnigh an solas ar lasadh

St Patrick's National School

Slane, Co. Meath

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Roll No: 18040L
Principal:
Paul O'Donnell

Revision No. 9
Date: September 2026

Code of Behaviour

1. Introduction

This Code of Behaviour has been developed in accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000) and the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), now operating under Tusla Education Support Service.

"Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life" (Department of Education and Skills, 2018).

This Code of Behaviour supports and promotes wellbeing across all aspects of school life.

2. Policy Aims

The policy reflects the ethos of a Catholic primary school. Staff, in partnership with parents and the Board of Management, aim to provide a safe, caring, and respectful environment for all in our school community where:

- Pupils are enabled to become more self-disciplined, responsible, and to demonstrate high standards of positive behaviour.
- Everyone respects themselves, others and school property.
- The educational and developmental needs of all pupils are supported.
- The safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community is ensured.

3. Guiding Principles

- Respect and dignity for all.
- Inclusivity and equality.
- Fairness and consistency.
- Recognition of individual needs.
- Promotion of positive behaviour through encouragement and support.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

"The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students" (National Educational Welfare Board, 2008, p. 22)

Board of Management

- Ensure the policy is in place and reviewed regularly

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- Ratify and support implementation.

Principal

- Provide leadership in implementation
- Ensure consistency across the school
- Liaise with the Board of management, parents and external agencies.

Staff

- Model the behaviour expected of others
- Implement the policy consistently and fairly
- Promote positive behaviour and wellbeing
- Use preventative and restorative approaches
- Differentiate support for pupils with additional needs.

Parents/Guardians

- Support the school's Code of Behaviour
- Promote positive behaviour at home
- Respect school property and label school uniform items
- Ensure attendance and punctuality
- Drop and collect children at the school gate
- Engage with the school when concerns arise.

5. School Rules for Pupils

1. Have respect for yourself, other pupils and their property
2. Respect and follow instructions given by school staff
3. Know how and when to move
4. Know how and when to talk
5. Enjoy playtime; consider other people and the environment

Rule 1: Have respect for yourself, other pupils and their property

- Listen while others are speaking- no interrupting
- Don't distract others while they are working
- Be kind and thoughtful to others. Name calling, bullying, physical injury, biting, pulling hair, vulgarity, spitting, bad language, throwing things at people or martial arts are not permitted
- Allow for differences, others' strengths and weaknesses, no mocking/teasing.
- Don't tamper with others' property
- Full uniform is expected as per the school uniform policy
- No mobile phones/smart watches*** see below**
- Children wearing jewelry in school must keep it to a minimum i.e. one pair of stud earrings. No other jewellery or make up should be worn as per the school uniform policy

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- Toys, trading cards, teddies, fidget toys and digital devices, unless by prior agreement, are not permitted.

*** Currently, pupils are not permitted to use phones, smart watches or other personal digital devices during school time but can apply to bring them to school to be kept in the teacher's drawer during the day. The following is the proposed timeline for the end of this arrangement:**
1. 2026-2027 3rd to 6th class pupils can apply to bring digital devices to school and hand them up to staff during the day
2. 2027-2028 - 4th to 6th class pupils have permission for above
3. 2028-2029 - 5th and 6th class pupils have permission for above
4. 2029-2030 - 6th class pupils have permission for above
5. 2030-2031 onwards - no pupil has permission to bring digital devices to school under any circumstance.

Rule 2: Respect and follow instructions given by school staff

- Be polite and courteous
- Don't interrupt teacher/adult conversations.
- Stand aside in corridor, hold doors open, greet staff
- Respect privacy-i.e. staffroom (lunchtimes), staff members' desks
- Be honest when discussing incidents
- Accept correction, if warranted
- Pay attention
- Trust staff members to be fair, working on pupils' behalf
- Don't tampering with staff members' property.

Rule 3: Know how and when to move

- Move about the school in an orderly manner
- Walk in single file on the left-hand side of corridors
- Children are not permitted on school grounds before 9:10am and after 3:00pm unless authorised by a teacher
- Pupils come to, and come from school with due care for others, for property, for traffic and pedestrians
- During morning assembly, children will walk in a calm manner to their line and remain there until the teacher comes to collect them
- During lunch period to get lunch, put papers in the bin, classroom jobs, remain in seat otherwise
- Raise hand if help is needed e.g. correction of copy
- The paring of pencils, going to the toilet and wet play class activities are to be agreed at each individual class level.

Rule 4: Know how and when to talk

- Children raise their hand when they wish to speak, and wait to be asked
- Low-level talking during lunchtime
- Low-level talking during wet play breaks
- Low-level talking during art, PE, project work and drama
- Be quiet in corridors
- Greet visitors

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- No bad language.

Rule 5: Enjoy playtime; consider other people and the environment

- Stay in line when walking between the classroom and yard.
- Always ask permission from the yard duty teacher if you need to re-enter the building during break. Children are expected to notify the teacher on duty of their return to the yard. Children may only re-enter the building if they are sick, following an accident, and need to use the toilet, for cuts to first aid station with staff member. Children with medical illness notes from parents to stay in, stay in junior corridor between both yards.
- Show respect to the teacher/SNA on duty and to the other pupils during playtime. Follow instructions and always remain within sight of the teacher. Any mess fighting, bullying, intimidation, verbal abuse or constant harassment will be seen as serious misbehaviour and dealt with accordingly. Pupils are encouraged to include classmates in their game.
- Play within your permitted area.
- Report all accidents and serious incidents to the teacher on duty.
- Respect and look after school equipment.
- Stop playing and line up when you hear the bell. Return all equipment neatly.
- Wait quietly for teacher to come and collect, enter school building in a line, walking behind the person in front of you.

The above rules also apply on school trips or tours.

6. Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs

Any child can show challenging behaviour, not just those with additional needs. While the behaviour may be easy to see, the reasons behind it are not always obvious. It is important that everyone in the school understands any such needs, including the reasons behind challenging behaviour.

The school will always aim to treat all pupils fairly under the Code of Behaviour, but we also recognise that some pupils may need individual support and approaches to behaviour.

These supports may include:

- Individual Behaviour Support Plans
- A regulation first approach to re-frame behaviour
- Visual schedules and supports
- Social stories
- Sensory regulation strategies and movement breaks
- Reduced or adapted timetables where appropriate
- Access to quiet/safe spaces
- Collaboration with parents, Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and other external support services.

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Any such supports and/ or approaches will be cognisant of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) *Relate* document. They will also be planned and reviewed with parents. Sanctions may be adjusted to suit the needs of individual pupils. Teachers will make sure pupils understand why their behaviour is not acceptable and the purpose of any sanction. In some cases, outside support, such as clinical or therapeutic services may be required.

If there is a risk of injury to a pupil or others, trained staff may use approved Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) interventions. In all such instances, Circular 0081/2024 *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students* will be followed.

7. Promoting Positive Behaviour

All pupils deserve encouragement to attain the best version of themselves. The use of praise and rewards for good behaviour is strongly promoted within the school. Praise and rewards are earned by the maintenance of good standards, as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. The following are some examples of how praise and rewards might be given, but the lists are not exhaustive:

Praise - quiet words or gestures to show approval, comments in books or copies, verbal praise in person/ on intercom/ at assembly, delegation of special responsibilities or privileges, communication with parents.

Rewards - stickers, star charts, team, group or table rewards, lucky dip, golden time, homework vouchers, Dojo points, student of the week/month, stamps, extra-curricular activities.

8. School Organisation

Yard - designated play areas for different class levels, yard games provided and play equipment available. Adequate number of staff supervising at each break, on yards and on field, when the field is in operation.

Wet day supervision – pupils have access to board games, activities, library books, colouring activities etc. and staff supervise designated areas throughout the school.

If supervising staff members are absent, other staff members deputise to ensure continuity.

9. Levels of Misbehaviour

Under the code of behaviour, levels of misbehaviour are defined to clearly distinguish the severity and impact of different actions, ensuring fair and consistent responses.

The following are samples of misbehaviour but this is not an exhaustive list. Repeated minor misbehaviour may be considered serious misbehaviour, and repeated serious misbehaviour may be considered gross misbehaviour.

Minor Misbehaviour: (Stage 1)
Homework repeatedly not completed without a note, interfering with others, chewing gum, rudeness, borrowing items without asking, answering out of turn, not wearing uniform, swinging on chairs, senior pupils running through junior yard, passing notes.

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Serious Misbehaviour: (Stage 2 and 3)
Fighting, all forms of bullying, mitching, bad language, bad attitude, name calling, exclusion, rough play, disrespecting others, racist, sexist or discriminatory language, hitting, spitting, biting, talking back, belittling personal comments, having mobile phones/ smart watches / digital technology on school premises, damaging play equipment or school property, damaging the property of others, stealing, leaving classroom/school premises without permission, climbing on walls, trees etc. without direction and supervision (see outdoor play policy and risk assessment).

Gross Misbehaviour: (Stage 3)
Gross Misbehaviour is where a pupil's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the safe operation of the school. Examples of gross misbehaviour include but are not limited to: serious damage to school property, striking a member of staff, serious physical violence which threatens the safety of other pupils and staff.

10. Sanctions

Maintaining high standards of behaviour will involve, in some instances, the application of sanctions. Where sanctions or consequences are applied, pupils should understand that: persistent unacceptable behaviour has consequences to help improve behaviour, the behaviour rather than the person is the focus, and that consequences will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

The following steps will be taken when pupils behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for minor misbehaviour and seven being for gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. The exact categorisation of misbehaviour and sanctions will be a matter for teachers or school management. It may be deemed necessary to bypass early stages due to the gravity of the misdemeanour or for repeat offences.

Stage 1A - Reasoning and/or verbal warning, including advice on how to improve.

Stage 1B - In class reflection space. On yard, separation from yard activities for an appropriate amount of time.

Stage 2A - Loss of privileges (in class - discretionary class activities, loss of access to class rewards, or preferred seating, roles of responsibility etc. On yard - removal from specific yard activities, assigned to a specific area of the yard.)

Stage 2B - Verbal warning from the Principal/ Deputy Principal. A phone call or face-to-face meeting with parents will also be arranged by the class teacher.

Stage 3A - Exclusion from some school outings.

Stage 3B- Suspension.

Stage 3C - Expulsion

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Communication with parents / guardians will occur at all stages from stage 2 onwards. However, communication with parents at early stages will also be used at teachers' discretion at earlier stages, so that parents are part of the solution to reduce the possibility of behaviour escalating.

Suspension
While the Board of Management has the authority to suspend, it has delegated this authority to the Principal for periods of up to three days. The suspension process will follow Chapter 11 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB)

Expulsion
A pupil may be expelled from the school on the authority of the Board of Management. Any matters relating to criminal offences will be reported to the Gardaí. and any child protection matters will be reported to TUSLA. The expulsion process will follow Chapter 12 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB)

11. Review and Ratification

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 7th October 2026

Fr. Richard Matthews **(Chairperson)**