



Code of Behaviour

Bunscoil Bhríde

Introductory Statement

This code of behaviour was formulated in October 2002 by the staff of Bunscoil Bhríde and the Parents' Representative on the Board of Management. It was implemented in April 2003, reviewed in June 2004, May 2009, May 2011, March 2013 and June 2016. This current plan was reviewed and redeveloped by the staff in the third term of 2019, in consultation with all staff members, the members of the Board of Management, the Student Council, the Parents Association and the entire parent body and was reviewed in February 2022 and December 2023.

This code should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies (Health and Safety, Anti-Bullying, Homework, Healthy Eating and Enrolment policies).

Rationale

- The Board of Management of Bunscoil Bhríde have ensured that this Code of Behaviour is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
 - A. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
 - B. *The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*
 - C. *The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*
 - D. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
 - E. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos of our school

Bunscoil Bhríde seeks to enable each child to develop her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. Our code of behaviour reflects the vision of the child at the centre of the learning process and we hope to ensure that each child is provided with experiences that are relevant and age appropriate to her needs in a non-disruptive environment. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and cooperation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required

and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of our 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. This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the overriding aims will be;

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement; '**Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh Sí**' (*praise the child and she will grow*)
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community;
- To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their cooperation in the application of these procedures;
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate 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 cooperation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The overriding principle governing this code is respect - respect for ourselves and others and the property of others.

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults;
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, their own belongings and those of others;
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
- Each pupil is expected to do her best both in school and in the completion of homework.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules" (see Appendix 1), each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and

they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

We strongly believe that no pupil has the right to deny any other pupil the opportunity to reap the full benefit from her education.

The approach taken to Behaviour Support of pupils in the Bluebells Class at Bunscoil Bhríde acknowledges the pupil's behavioural difficulties may be linked to the triad of impairments, sensory sensitivities and cognitive abilities of the individual. The school acknowledges that the pupils may have a dual diagnosis and recognises the impact this might have on their behaviour. All of these factors will be assessed and will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual pupils. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce problematic behaviours; however, the complex needs of individual students will always inform the ultimate approach adopted.

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students, parents and other members of the school community have a role to play in modelling good behaviour. The school values the support and cooperation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during all school related activities.

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code and development of positive behaviour strategies. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

Our vision statement is '*Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh Sí.*'

We use the following strategies to promote Positive Behaviour;

- Praise & recognition
- RESPECT Approach
- Positive play in the playground
- Buddy systems
- Golden Rules
- Stamp and sticker systems
- Assembly – reinforcement lessons and acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Whole school acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Reward systems in the class for positive behaviour (additional yard time, Golden time, Homework Passes, etc)
- Behaviour contracts
- Visit to another teacher or the Principal for praise of good behaviour or neat work

- Various motivational strategies and reward systems within each classroom
- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly;
- Implementation of Programmes such as *Circle Time* to promote positive behaviour.
- Implementation of the Friends for Life Programme for all pupils in Third Class annually.
- 'Friendship Week' as a whole-school initiative annually

The above list is not exhaustive and consists of examples only.

To facilitate new members of staff in becoming familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be included in all teachers' documents. The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The following strategies will be used by all teachers:

Praise

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child's exercise book;
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- A reward system – student of the week/occasional treats;
- Special mention at assembly;
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;
- A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication
- Happy notes

Disapproval

The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the nature of the strategies employed. The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour:

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Time out (Age appropriate including advising child about reflecting on their behaviour) during Yard Time.
- Temporary removal from group (within the class)
- Reflection sheet (signed by parent and kept on file by teacher);
- Withdrawal from class and sent to another teacher/classroom during privileged activity
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians;
- Withdrawal of privileges;
- Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal;
- Formal written communication with parents/guardians;
- Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management;

- Formal meeting with between Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management and parents/guardians;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. Teachers can use a problem solving approach in generating solutions and strategies with the pupil. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to “catch” repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, SESS, HSE or other agencies.

Classification of Misbehaviours

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

Interrupting class work / Running in the school building / Littering around the school / Being discourteous or unmannerly / Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian) / Inappropriate behaviour or gestures / Name calling / Minor infringement of the school rules / Talking out of turn / Not wearing appropriate uniform (this list is not exhaustive)

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Verbal reprimand;
- Time out (yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Instances of yard misbehaviour in the incident book and informing class teacher.

Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows, using one or more strategy:

Phase 1

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom with specific work when privileges are withdrawn
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)

Phase 2

- Child will be sent to the Principal in office;
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of continuous misbehaviour;
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour;
- Class teacher and/or Principal will meet with one/both parents;
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

*Constantly disruptive in class / Telling lies / Blackmail / Stealing / Persistently not working to full potential / Damaging others' property / Bullying / Answering back a teacher / Continuously not completing homework / Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard / Using unacceptable language / Inappropriate use of the internet/ Making any unauthorised recordings of any individual(s) within the school community using e-devices (please see Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy, which states that phones/devices are not permitted at school)/ Deliberate, continual disobedience/ Spitting
(this list is not exhaustive)*

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)

Teachers will take steps as outlined for Phase 1 above, but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour;

- Child will be sent to the Principal;
- An account of all incidents will be entered in the relevant Incident book;
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of misbehaviour;
- Class teacher or Yard duty teacher **and** Principal will meet with one/both parents;
- Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal;

Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- Parents will be invited to meet class teacher, the Principal and/or the chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour;
- Suspension will be used as a sanction **where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians** of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion. Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained)

Gross Misbehaviour

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school / Smoking / Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate / Leaving school premises without permission / Deliberately injuring any member of the school community / Setting fire to school property / Purposely activating school fire alarm/ Deliberately leaving taps etc. turned on / Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting,

spitting) / Vandalism / serious inappropriate behaviour / assault / Sharing of images or voice recordings etc. taken while at school on social media platforms

Repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

- Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned. The Board of Management has deferred responsibility to the Principal to impose an initial sanction of up to three days. Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.
- When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and 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 in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the student (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be readmitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the board and the Principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case (see p.81, Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

Misbehaviour on the Yard

To pre-empt incidents of misbehaviour on yard, our whole school approach focuses on **RESPECT** – respect for yourself, respect for others, respect for the environment. We encourage pupils to take responsibility should they accidentally hurt another child, thus showing respect for that individual.

Incidents of yard misbehaviour or verbal abuse of staff will be dealt with as follows:
The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will do the following;

- Impose a period of “time out” where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
- Teacher Reports in **yard incident book**.
- Inform the class teacher.
- The Principal will speak with the child and the parents will be informed.

Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil’s Homework journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil’s behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity. In specific cases a shorter school day may be implemented where a pupil is having severe difficulties coping with a full day. This would be agreed between the Principal and Parents and Board of Management.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the Principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Others who may also attend these meetings include; class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty and the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour, because of educational needs. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills 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. 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)

Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded on our pupil administration system. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents will be informed by text when their child has been absent for 10 days and 15 days of school respectively. Under current legislation, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

Reference to other Policies

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices
- Data Protection
- Health & Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs
- Child Protection

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- *Positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment*
- *Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers*
- *Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.*

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in December 2023.

Appendix 1

School Rules

1. Obey and respect all staff members and follow directions given
2. Show respect to all members of the school community and respect other pupils' right to learn. Interruptions, answering out of turn, bad manners, interfering with another's property etc. are unacceptable
3. Bad language is not permitted at school. Inappropriate language, if used towards a teacher or anywhere within the school or while on a school activity is considered a breach of the code
4. Pupils must remain on the school grounds at all times unless instructed otherwise
5. Pupils must remain within the marked boundaries of the school yards
6. Cycling in the school grounds is not permitted except under the instruction of the teacher.
7. Pupils should exit the building at break times and not re-enter until the bell rings except with a teacher's permission.
8. All interactions with other children should be respectful. Any behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and be safe is unacceptable. Fighting, rough play or any physical force is never allowed or tolerated
9. Pupils are expected to walk in an orderly fashion on the corridors and stairs. Banisters must be held while going up or down stairs
10. Respect the property of the school and others
11. The school's healthy eating policy should be adhered to. Chewing gum, crisps, popcorn, fizzy drinks, energy drinks, bars, sweets or nuts are not permitted in school
12. Toys or unnecessary stationery are not permitted in school
13. Pupils are expected to remain seated when the teacher leaves the classroom
14. Litter should be placed in the correct bin
15. Pupils must play with their own class level only.
16. Tippex or aerosol sprays are not permitted in school
17. Pupils must wear the correct uniform. Runners (with a supportive sole) must be worn with the school tracksuit. Canvas runners and 'heelies' are forbidden in the school or on the school grounds
18. Jewellery, (with the exception of small stud earrings and a watch) is not permitted at school
19. Facial make up is not permitted
20. For safety and hygiene purposes, nails must be kept short. Fake nails are not permitted
21. Hair, if long, must be tied up.
22. Mobile phones, electronic devices and smart watches are not permitted