

# ***Code of Behaviour***

## ***Scoil Molaise, Old Leighlin***

### **1. Introduction**

The Board of Management and Staff of Scoil Molaise aim to provide a safe, friendly and happy school environment for pupils and staff. Positive behaviour is promoted and encouraged so that the school can function in an orderly and harmonious way, thereby creating a positive learning environment in which each child can reach his /her full potential. This ideal can only be achieved where there is good communication and a high level of respect between staff, parents and pupils.

The Board of Management is ultimately responsible for behaviour in the school. The overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher is responsible for maintaining good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to comply with the school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school staff.

The school's Code of Behaviour was initially drawn up in November 2010. This review was carried out in December 2020, in consultation with Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Pupils.

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has necessitated that the Code of Behaviour be updated in compliance with the requirements of NPHET, DES and HSE guidance on protection from coronavirus (Covid-19).

### **2. Aims of the code**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency in response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To communicate the school's expectations and strategies to the wider school community
- To encourage co-operation between parents/guardians and the school in the implementation of this policy
- To protect the health and safety of all our pupils, staff and their families by our strict adherence to the advice issued by the HSE in relation to Covid 19

### **3. 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 pupil attending the school". The school recognises that there are times and factors in a child's life that may influence their behaviour. These will be taken into consideration and the child and his/her behaviour may be accommodated as a result.

In compliance with Section 23 (4) of the Education Act, prior to registering a pupil, parents/guardians will be issued with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour. They must confirm in writing that they accept the school's policy 'and that they make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code' in order to fulfil the conditions of enrolment.

#### 4. **Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour – Roles and Responsibilities**

Staff members, supported by the Board of Management, adopt a positive approach to discipline within the school. Children are encouraged and praised for their efforts in maintaining discipline. The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony
- A teamwork approach to behaviour
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- An inclusive and involved school community
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy

##### **Responsibility of Staff**

- The adults in the school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children. All school staff will endeavour to provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- The staff will carry comply with all school policies adopted by the Board of Management. At the beginning of each school year all teachers will discuss the Code of Behaviour and devise a set of positive class rules with the class.
- The school's Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.
- A positive and consistent approach will be adopted by all staff to rewards and sanctions.
- The staff will ensure that they communicate any concerns in relation to a child's behaviour and well-being to parents / guardians.
- A copy of the Code of Behaviour will be provided to each family upon enrolment; it is also available on the school website.

##### **Responsibility of Board of Management**

- The Board of Management provides a supportive role to the principal and the teaching staff in the positive implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- The Board has a responsibility for providing a safe and secure learning environment for all pupils.
- The Board has a statutory obligation to provide staff with a safe place of work.
- The Board will follow procedures outlined in this Code of Behaviour when dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour.
- The Board will ensure that school policies are compliant with DES circulars and current legislation.

##### **Responsibility of Parents / Guardians**

Scoil Molaise strives to foster a positive relationship between staff and parents/ guardians. Parents / guardians are actively involved in the school in a variety of ways e.g. school activities, Board of Management, Parents' Association Committee etc. Parental support is vital for the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour. The school therefore, requests that parents /guardians

- Read this policy and share the contents with their children in an age appropriate way.
- Co-operate with school staff in the implementation of all school policies.
- Co-operate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
- Ensure that children are punctual and are collected on time.

- Ensure that children's attendance is regular. (The school is legally obliged to notify the Education Welfare Services in TUSLA when a child is absent for more than 20 school days annually).
- Give a written explanation following a child's absence.
- Communicate issues of concern to the class teacher through a note, email, phone call or pre-arranged meeting.
- Attend parent/guardian teacher meetings as necessary.
- Supervise children's homework, ensuring that a genuine effort is made to complete it.
- Ensure that children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Ensure that children have an adequate lunch in accordance with the school's healthy lunch policy.
- Ensure that children wear their correct school uniform.
- Observe and respect all social distancing protocols when dropping off or collecting their children from the school
- Encourage their child to adhere to social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene guidelines
- Monitor their child closely for signs and symptoms of illness and keep child at home if they show any signs of infectious illness
- Ensure that meetings with school staff are arranged in advance through school office
- Ensure that the school has up to date contact information for parents/guardians and other family members who may be required to collect their child, should the child become ill or display covid symptoms during the school day.
- Answer telephone call from school/call school back promptly and have arrangements in place for prompt collection of their child should it be required
- The Board of Management has responsibility for the health and safety of all staff and students while at school; therefore, parents / guardians should never approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

### **Responsibility of Pupils –**

Each pupil is expected:

- to be well-behaved and to show respect and consideration for other children and adults.
- to be kind and willing to help others.
- to show respect for school property, other children's property and their own belongings.
- to do his/her best in class and for homework.
- to obey the instructions of school staff.
- to wear the correct uniform.
- to take part in all school activities, where possible.
- to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
- to follow the school's healthy lunch policy and internet usage policy.
- to remain in their classroom and / or on the school premises at all times and not to leave without permission before the end of the school day.
- to follow social distancing protocols, as directed by teachers.
- to practise good respiratory and cough etiquette.
- to practise good hand hygiene, as demonstrated by the teacher.
- to use hand sanitiser, wipes, soap, hand towels as directed by the teacher.

## 5. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Pupil input is a very important part of establishing a positive atmosphere for learning in the classroom. At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will involve the pupils in drafting a list of **class rules**. These class rules will be kept to a minimum and will be devised with due regard to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run').

Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, taking into consideration the age of the pupils and individual differences. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage. Teachers will ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

### Examples of Classroom Rules

- Treat others with respect and kindness.
- Always try your best.
- Be honest. Tell the truth.
- Respect the belongings of others.
- Do not interrupt the teacher or others when speaking.
- Keep your desk area neat and tidy.
- Remain in your seat if a teacher has to leave the room.
- Wear your correct uniform. Wear tracksuit and runners only on PE days.
- Practise good respiratory and cough etiquette.
- Practise good hand hygiene.
- Observe social distancing

### Incentives/Reward System

Part of our vision of Scoil Molaise is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our rewards system seeks to provide encouragement to pupils of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Children may receive praise for working hard, good behaviour or noteworthy personal achievements.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- Homework pass / certificate of merit / prize / golden time

## **The Playground**

The following strategies are implemented to promote good behaviour, and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour in the school yard.

- At both break times, teachers are on duty in the playground, assisted by Special Needs Assistants (SNAs).
- While the SNAs assist with yard supervision the teacher on duty is responsible for disciplinary matters and SNAs will refer children to the teacher.
- In the interest of social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic, each class is allocated an area in the playground to which pupils must stay within.
- In the event of misbehaviour during yard time, the teacher on duty will address the issue.
  - Classroom teachers will be informed of misbehaviour by supervising teacher
- A report of any incident may be recorded in the Incident Book in the office
- The Principal will be informed of serious incidents of misbehaviour. Parents will be notified if deemed necessary.
- All pupils must adhere to the following playground rules:

Move around the allocated area with due care

Play safely at all times

Do not engage in rough play

Follow staff instructions

## **School Related Activities**

Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are the responsibility of the school e.g. school tours, games, extra-curricular activities and other school related events.

## **Children with Special Needs / Emotionally disturbed children**

Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing behaviourally, socially or educationally. Additional inputs or interventions might include:

- Referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the pupil.
- Involving other appropriate professionals in supporting the pupil.
- Setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way.
- Behaviour contracts.

## **6. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable Behaviour**

Despite the best effort of the school, it is expected that incidences of inappropriate behaviour will arise from time to time. Even minor breaches of the code of behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.

Three levels of unacceptable behaviour are recognised by Scoil Molaise. They are Minor, Serious and Gross misbehaviours.

It is important to note that the lists below are not exhaustive and that other unacceptable

behaviours may be added or included at the school's discretion.

**Examples of minor misbehaviour include:**

- Talking out of turn / disrupting the class
- Not wearing appropriate uniform
- Chewing gum
- Not following instructions from staff
- Using bad language
- Name-calling
- Commenting negatively on another child's work
- Careless treatment of books and classroom equipment e.g. scribbling on books
- Dropping litter
- Deliberately not abiding by social distancing rules,
- Deliberately not following respiratory and cough etiquette
- Deliberate misuse of sanitiser, wipes, soap, hand towels etc.

**Examples of serious misbehaviour include:**

- Negative physical contact e.g. pushing, hitting, biting, spitting, kicking, tripping up, pulling hair, punching etc.
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Refusal to co-operate with the teacher or to do assigned work
- Deliberate exclusion of peers
- Damaging school property
- Stealing
- Use of mobile phone or other personal electronic equipment without permission
- Bringing dangerous objects into school
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Any behaviour that is hurtful to others, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation
- Deliberately coughing or sneezing on another child or member of staff.

**Examples of gross misbehaviour include:**

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Persistent bullying / cyber bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes
- Any deliberate action which poses a serious threat to the personal health and safety of another pupil or member of staff
- Deliberate and aggressive coughing on another child or member of staff, despite previous warnings
- Deliberate spitting on another child or staff member

## **7. Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline 'the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined'.

Teachers will use their professional judgement and their knowledge of the child and of the particular circumstances of the behaviour or incident in responding to unacceptable behaviour and in selecting the appropriate sanction. The sanction will be proportionate to the behaviour or incident in question.

It may include:

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Loss of playtime in yard
7. Time out time, either in the classroom or in another room.
8. Teacher communicating with parents
9. Referral to Principal
10. Principal communicating with parents
11. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular22/02 and Education Welfare Act 2000)

This list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour from reoccurring and where relevant, to help the pupil to devise strategies to manage their own behaviour appropriately.

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child who does not do his /her work in class or has not completed his/her homework may be detained at break time to finish the work.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of health & safety, but may be deprived of engagement in a particular school event eg. a match or school trip etc.

## **8. Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

Examples:

Physical: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.

Verbal: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.

Emotional: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability /Isolating or shunning another child /Threats to extort money or possessions/ cyber or text bullying

All incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the school in accordance with Scoil Molaise's Anti-Bullying Policy. The procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour may be applied in more serious cases.

## **9. Suspension & Expulsion**

Before a serious sanction such as suspension or expulsion is used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised in order to address the matters of concern. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter/email depending on the circumstances. Parents/Guardians will be invited to discuss their child's misbehaviour with the class teacher and/or principal.

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 to discuss the matter with Chairperson and the Principal. Every effort will be made to involve the parents in the management of the problematic behaviour. Parents/Guardians will be expected to give an undertaking that they will do everything possible to encourage the pupil to behave in an acceptable manner in the future.

Suspension may be considered for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour. Students and their parents/guardians will be fully informed about any allegation and the process used to investigate and decide the matter. Suspension should always be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, taking into consideration the

child's record of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB Guidelines for developing a Code of Behaviour in Schools (2008).

Grounds for deciding on suspension could be:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to the safety of pupils and/or staff. (The Board of Management must be cognisant of its responsibility to provide a safe and secure learning environment for pupils and a safe place of work for staff.)
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

The Board of Management delegates authority to the Principal to suspend any pupil immediately for up to a period of 3 days. (This will need to be discussed by BoM and if agreed formally notified in writing to the Principal.) The Principal shall inform parents about their right to appeal and inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management about the suspension. If a pupil is to be suspended beyond 3 days, approval will have to be sought from the Chairperson of the Board of Management in consultation with other Board members. This suspension will have an upper limit of 10 days.

**Expulsion** may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour in Schools (2008).

Examples of what might constitute an extreme case:

- Serious threats of violence
- Actual violence towards other students or staff
- Selling or giving drugs to other pupils.

Authority for expulsion rests with the Board of Management. Before Expulsion takes place the Principal should:

- Ensure that a detailed investigation is carried out.
- Prepare a report for the Board of Management.
- Ensure that parents/guardians and Board of Management have the same report.
- Notify the Board and parents/guardians of the arrangements for the board meeting / disciplinary hearing i.e. date and time.

The Principal presents the report to the Board in the presence of the parents. The parents may challenge and respond to the report. When discussions have ended the principal and parents leave the meeting at the same time. The Board then makes its decision on whether or not to expel the pupil. The Board must inform the parents/guardians in writing of their intention to expel, indicating whether or not this is a permanent expulsion. The Board shall notify the local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act. The Education Welfare Officer will then consult with the principal, the Board of Management, the parents/guardians and the pupil. Pupils should not be expelled from the school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under S24(4) Education Welfare Act 2000 by an Education Welfare Officer. The Board shall inform the parents /guardians of the child about their right to appeal under Section 29 of the Act 1998. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents or student. The Board will prepare a response if an appeal is being investigated by The Department of Education & Skills

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following and during a period of Suspension, the parents / guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent / guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school's code of behaviour 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 other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

For further information on the procedures involved in suspension and expulsion please see the document "Developing a Code of Behaviour. Guidelines for Schools," published by NEWB (2008) which is available on the DES website.

#### **10. Children with Special Needs**

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance to help them to understand certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans may be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support / resource teacher, and / or Principal. School staff will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

#### **11. Method of Communicating with Parents:**

A high level of co-operation and open communication between staff, pupils and their parents/guardians are important factors in encouraging positive behaviour in the school.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to speak in confidence to the teacher about any significant developments or events in a child's life which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of home school communication are used at all levels within the school:

- Informal or formal parent / teacher meetings (Remote meetings will be facilitated if appropriate).
- Notes in children's homework journal - Infants do not have a homework journal so parents/guardians should check schoolbags for notes from the teacher.
- Email to parents.
- Letters.
- Phone Call.
- Text-a-Parent

If parents have any concerns they are encouraged to contact the school at an early stage to arrange a meeting with the class teacher or Principal.

#### **12. Involving parents/guardians in the management of problem behaviour.**

- Initially, parents /guardians are contacted by the class teacher and invited to a meeting to discuss the concerns regarding the pupil's behaviour. (Remote meetings may be an option).
- If behaviour persists, the parent will be invited to discuss their child's behaviour with the class teacher and Principal.
- Where serious misbehaviour is repeated, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to meet with the Chairperson and the Principal.
- Every effort will be made to put parents at their ease in order to maximise a co-operative approach.

#### **10. Keeping Records**

In Scoil Molaise records are kept in relation to incidences of pupil's misbehaviour. These records are kept by the class teacher in his /her own teacher's book.

If a serious incident occurs in the yard the teacher / S.N.A on yard duty will note the incident in the incident book marked "Private and Confidential" in the office. The records are dated and written in a factual and impartial manner.

The Principal is informed by members of staff at the earliest opportunity about incidences of serious misbehaviour in class or in the yard.

The school's record system:

- Allows the school to track a student's behaviour and check whether efforts to change behaviour are working
- Records interventions aimed at helping to deal with unacceptable behaviour, including contact with parents or referral to other agencies
- Records positive responses and evidence of improved behaviour by students
- Records sanctions used and the reasons why
- Is kept in accordance with the Data Protection rules

### **11. Procedures for Notification of Pupils Absences from School**

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Code of Behaviour specifies the following procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for the absence.

As mentioned in Scoil Molaise's policy on attendance the following strategies are used to encourage school attendance.

- The management and staff endeavour to create a safe welcoming, stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- Teaching staff collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.
- There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published during the month of June.
- Full attendance, good attendance and improvement on attendance are awarded to students at the end of each school year through the use of attendance certificates etc. The Principal of the school completes on-line reports to Tusla [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) on all children's absences each school year at appointed reporting times throughout the year.

When a child is absent for longer than one day parents are requested to contact the school and inform the class teacher about the reason for a child's absence.

Upon returning to school parents /guardians must send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence, even if parents /guardians have already contacted the school. These notes are signed and dated by the class teacher and kept by the class teacher until September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following new school year.

Parents /Guardians are continually made aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act section 17 and 21 and its implications, especially in relation to absences of 20 days or more in any school year.

Under new guidelines issued by the Department of Health in relation to Covid-19, parents are requested to fill in a 'Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form' when children are returning to school after any absence.

### **12. Reference to other school policies:**

- S.P.H.E Plan
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy
- Homework Policy
- Record keeping Policy
- Covid-19 Response Plan

### **13. Success Criteria.**

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

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

**14. Roles and Responsibilities.**

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of Scoil Molaise Board of Management. Parents and Pupils have the responsibility to co-operate with the whole school in helping to implement this policy. All members of the school community will continue to have responsibility for the continued implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy.

**15. Implementation Date:**

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

**16. Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_14/12/2020\_\_\_\_\_

Signed *Maria Doyle* Chairperson B.O.M.

Signed *Mandy Ryan* Principal, Scoil Molaise.

The policy was communicated to the Parents Association on \_09/12/2020 and 10/02/2021\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: *Bridget Walsh* Chairperson Parents' Association.

This policy will be provided to all new applicants upon enrolment.

This policy will be reviewed annually.