



Code of Behaviour

Scoil Choluim, Ballyheerin, Fanad, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Good behaviour is based on good relations between the child, all staff members including visiting teachers and specialists, parents/ guardians and the whole school community.

In *Scoil Choluim*, we hope to foster this ideal by fostering a relationship based on open & honest two-way communication, enthusiastic co-operation and consistent support for all parties.

We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour our school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour on the school yard and premises and during school trips, tours and special occasions.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the our school rules, the importance of following them. Parents/ Guardians should communicate any relevant concerns to the school in a timely manner where they will be thoroughly investigated by the class teacher or principal.

Aims of the code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote high self-esteem and positive relationships between the pupils themselves and between the pupils and all teachers, staff members and visitors to our school.
- To encourage consistency of 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 for one another and for the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption and to facilitate good classroom management and behaviour on yard.
- To ensure that all children are treated in a fair and consistent manner- acknowledged and praised for positive behaviour and reasonably reprimanded for unjustifiable negative behaviour, thus benefitting from a safe, fair and consistent learning environment.
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook- Is there a handbook? availability of policies and an ethos of open communication two-way communication.
- To acknowledge the role of the home environment in regards to behaviour in school and to encourage cooperation and communication between home and school.

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at 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.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression & abuse, verbal aggression & abuse and to encourage *'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'*.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

School Rules

1. We show respect for yourself and others
2. We show respect for our own property, school property and the property of other pupils and staff members.
3. We show respect for other students and their learning.
4. We are kind and willing to help others.
5. We follow instructions from staff immediately and without contradiction.
6. We walk quietly in the school building.
7. We show courtesy and good manners.
8. We use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
9. We use respectful strategies for avoiding difficulties and conflict.
10. We ask permission to leave the classroom/school.
11. We do our best in class with our work and our behaviour.
12. We take responsibility for our own work and behaviour.
13. We wear the appropriate uniform.
14. We follow our Healthy Eating Policy.

These can be summed up as 6 Golden Rules:

1. We listen. We don't interrupt.
2. We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
3. We are honest. We tell the truth.
4. We show kindness and respect in our words and actions.
5. We work hard. We don't waste time.
6. We look after property. We don't damage things.

These 6 "Golden Rules" will be the main ones used for infant classes. Rules apply during school-time and during all school related activities.

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based closely on the "Golden Rules". Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for 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, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Behaviour on Yard

Quite often, children learn to abide the classroom rules quite quickly but the unstructured nature of yard time can lead to negative behaviour. Social skills may need to be explicitly taught to individuals or groups of children. At Ballyheerin NS, we operate a card system in order to:

- A, Let children know that they are engaging in negative behaviour and that they will be sanctioned accordingly.
- B, Diffuse a situation where misbehaviour could escalate to serious or gross behaviour.
- C, To respond promptly to serious or gross behaviour.

A Yellow Card	A Blue Card	Red Card	Black Card
A verbal warning is given by the supervisor on yard to the pupil or group of pupils in response to minor misbehaviour.	If minor misbehaviour persists, the supervisor on yard may issue a pupil with a blue card where the pupil is instructed to go to a designated spot on yard to calm down for five minutes.	If minor misbehaviour persists or if an incident of serious behaviour occurs, the pupil will be brought to the principal's office where the incident will be recorded in the red book and parents will be notified via letter or phone call. The pupil/ pupils will be asked to complete an essay or 'Think sheet' regarding the incident.	If serious behaviour persists and a child's name is recorded 3 times or more in the red book, or if an incident of gross behaviour occurs, a pupil may be presented with a black card. A restorative session will be arranged between the child's parents, the principal and the Chairperson in which sanctions befitting of the serious or gross behaviour will be put in place

Incentives/Reward System

Part of the vision of *Scoil Choluim* 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 reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

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
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege e.g. golden time, earning a golden ticket.
- A smiley face, Sticker or points on the Class Dojo.
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly.
- A 'Star of the Week' certificate awarded at weekly assembly.
- The awarding of certificates at the end of the year.
- Winning a special prize.

Field trips, annual school tours and our end of year special event will be reserved for those who have consistently strived to behave well.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher or the adult on yard duty at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, meetings will be facilitated via phone or zoom.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school (if not sanctioned by the teacher under special circumstances)
- Having chewing-gum or other banned substances such as fizzy drinks
- Arguing and bickering during class or while on yard time instead of raising the issue with an adult.
- Going somewhere without seeking permission such entering/ leaving the school building during yard-time without permission.
- Using bad Language.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (harassment, discrimination and victimisation) such as hitting, kicking, isolating, antagonizing or provoking of another child.
- Persistent arguing and bickering during class or while on yard which does not cease after a staff member has intervened.
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning such as not following instructions, being deliberately un-co-operative or being disrespectful to staff members or other pupils.
- Making Threats to physically hurt another pupil or a staff member.
- Damage to property
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school e.g. a knife, a lighter etc.
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- A physical or verbal assault on a teacher or pupil which leaves the teacher or pupil injured or hurt.
- Theft of school property or the property of a staff members or pupil on the school premises.
- Intentional Damage to school property or the property of staff members or other pupils.
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes
- Bullying of any kind.

What is bullying?

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

- Physical: includes repeated pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- Verbal: repeated name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- Cyberbullying- This occurs if a child uses the Internet, a smartphone, or other technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another pupil or group of pupils.
- Prejudicial: based on prejudices that pupils have towards people of different races, religions, or sexual orientation. It can include repeated name-calling and physical aggression.
- Sexual bullying consists of repeated, harmful, and humiliating actions that target a person sexually.

Examples include sexual name-calling, crude comments and vulgar gestures.

- EMOTIONAL: repeated threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. This can involve Isolating or shunning a child.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.

In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.

Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour and behave appropriately in the future.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The 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 occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

Sanctions that staff members may use in response to misbehaviour:

1. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
2. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
3. Restorative Talk with class teacher, principal or SET.
4. Completing 'Think Sheet' or essay based on the story of what happened
5. Prescribing extra work to complete.
6. Loss of privileges such as golden time, attending a school trip, participating in a 'reward' type activity like baking
7. A period of 5min allocated to calm down and reflect during yard time (spent on 'calm spot').
8. Detention during break.
9. Communication with parents
10. Referral to Principal
11. Principal communicating with parents
12. A meeting with the Principal & Chairperson and parents.
13. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour or gross behaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the Board of Management, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. The process of Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

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 will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

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 in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents. The class teacher, SET teacher and/or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal and cooperation is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times.

Professional advice from psychological assessments will be sought and implemented. The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. Specific programmes may be implemented within the class setting or with individual pupils in order to promote positive behaviour and self-control, anger and conflict management, social skills and self-regulation. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals but also the right for all children to a happy and safe educational setting.

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher meetings by appointment.
- Through the children's homework journals.
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school.
- Private message via Class Dojo.
- Newsletters/school web-site/e-mails
- Private message via Whatsapp.
- Emails.
- Class Dojo Story.

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Principal & Board of Management
Scoil Choluim, Ballyheerin.