

Gortaleam National School



Code of Behaviour

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1.Guidelines Underpinning Our Code of Behaviour

- The School Climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of all the adults in the school community significantly influences how each child behaves
- The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a powerful effect on behaviour. The fostering of trust and respect is between staff and pupils and is mostly the responsibility of the staff
- The Code creates a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- The Code clearly sets out the School Rules and the Sanctions and Discipline Procedures that are in places for serious misconduct
- The Code focuses on helping the pupils to become responsible participating members of the school community
- The Code promotes equality and fairness
- The Code promotes a positive and safe working environment for all staff and pupils
- The Code promotes the conditions for learning and teaching in an atmosphere free from threat of violence
- The Code reflects the school's commitment to provide positive support for those pupils who are more vulnerable to behaviour problems
- The Code ensures that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all members of the school community are widely known and understood
- The Code incorporates the values of Restorative Practice which emphasise offering high levels of support through high levels of control, encouraging acceptance of responsibility and the setting of clear boundaries

2.Mission Statement

The School's mission is to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. The characteristic spirit of the school is positive, warm, friendly and inclusive where the pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence are nurtured within an atmosphere of mutual respect, honest effort and appreciation.

Our aim is to encourage, promote, reinforce and reward positive behaviour. In addition, it is our intention to increase the pupils' understanding of why the school rules are important and to develop their capacity to take responsibility for their behaviour. It is our hope to make parents aware of the need to maintain a satisfactory level of discipline. But most of our approaches centre on prevention and pro-activity rather than cure and re-activity.

3. Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management, teachers and other school staff, parents and pupils have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school. In reviewing our Code of Behaviour, we will ensure/have ensured that the strategies to support positive behaviour and the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour will be/have been discussed and agreed by all. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. The school therefore places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will in the long run give best results. The Conflict Resolution Process known as Restorative Practice is used in our school as a way of resolving problems.

Responsibilities of everybody in the School Community

The Board is expected to:

- Provide a comfortable and safe environment
- Support the Principal and Staff in implementing the Code
- Ensure the Code is communicated to the whole school community

The Principal and Staff are expected to:

- Teach and implement the Code
- Be cognisant of their duty of care
- Manage Learning Activity and Supervision in such a way as to minimise opportunities for disruptive behaviour
- Listen appropriately to pupils' explanations for behaviour

The Parents are expected to:

Notify the school if, when and why a pupil is absent from school. A note is required for absences of one day or more

- Encourage their children to have respect for themselves, their property and the personal space and the property of others
- Support their children to attend regularly and punctually
- Support and encourage their children's learning
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for staff and pupils
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's behaviour and progress

The Pupils are expected to:

- Keep the school rules to the best of their ability
- Take direction and correction from the staff always
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Make an honest effort and show respect

4. Positive Strategies for Behaviour Management:

Promoting and Reinforcing Behaviours that make school life good for everyone.

Whole School level

1. Positive Behaviour System-Caught Being Good
2. Verbal affirmation by staff on a daily basis

Class Room Level

1. Verbal affirmation and validation
2. Stickers, Stars, Stamps
3. Notes of Praise in Homework Journal.

5. School Rules

Golden Rules

- Be kind and fair to others
- Show Respect
 - *Listen when others speak*
 - *Respect others personal space and property*
- Tell the truth
- Honest effort
- Play fair

Classroom rules

- Keep the classroom clean and tidy.
- Walk in the classroom.
- Do your homework.
- Raise your hand when you want to ask or answer a question.
- Mobile phones are not permitted.

Playground Rules

- Stay in assigned area.
- Include all classmates.
- Play fairly (it's not all about winning).
- There is a need to supervise more closely the behaviour of certain age groups, certain areas of the playground and certain individual pupils. All children are visible always.

School Related Activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour usually apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. High standards of behaviour are expected during school tours, games, extracurricular activities, other school-linked events, on coming to and departing from school.

Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of Concern are behaviours that indicate a risk to the safety of the pupil or wellbeing of the pupil who exhibits them or indicate a risk to the safety or wellbeing of others.

In the case of serious Behaviours of Concern where it is deemed that there is a Health and Safety risk to staff or students' Parents/Guardians can be contacted to come to the school or to collect the child from school if necessary.

Following the incident the school may choose to take the following actions;

- School staff will complete an incident report
- School staff will reflect on the incident using the ABC model
- A risk assessment will be carried out in case of the Behaviour of Concern reoccurs
- An Individual Behaviour Plan will have been be devised and implemented
- The school may choose to seek the advice/support of the NCSE, NEPS, Tusla, the HSE and any other outside agencies which may be involved with the child

Proactive Support Strategies

Where behaviours of concern are identified, modifications to the environment and program will be made where practicable to reduce or prevent the

behaviour occurring. Where available, the Individual's Student Support File will be referred to.

If appropriate, a staff member will talk to the individual about their behaviour, and problem solve any strategies which could help them reduce the need to use behaviour of concern in order to have their needs met.

Any modifications or changes will be included into the Student Support File and/or Individual Behaviour Plan and all staff will be made aware.

When behaviours of concern arise

If a Participant displays behaviours of concern, the staff of Gortaleam National School may need to balance the care of the individual with their duty to protect other people and also themselves. **Any actions taken or strategies used should be in direct accordance with the student's Individual Behaviour Plan.** Where behaviours of concern arise staff should, taking care not to put themselves at risk: We adhere to following the steps listed here.

1. Presence

Standing in front of or near to the student. Try to redirect the individual. Talk to the individual who is displaying a behaviour of concern in a calm manner using short assertive communication in an attempt to diffuse the situation.

2. Touching

Lead, guide, block door handle. If there is a need to touch state clearly "Tom, I am going to hold your hand/put my hand on your shoulder to help you leave the classroom". Remove the individual who is displaying the behaviour of concern away from other people, or if this is unsuccessful move other people away to a safe distance

3. Holding

Student handheld by one adult but retains a level of mobility. Communicate this clearly to the pupil that you are doing this and why.

4. Restraint

Complete restricted mobility-2 adults holding legs and arms or carrying ac communicating the need to do this to the child. However, we use minimum

force and hold for the least amount of time possible to remove the child from the room or situation.

If the individual continues with the behaviour of concern and the staff member is unable to support the individual in reducing this behaviour and it is considered an emergency situation, the staff should contact the Principal immediately.

Parents/guardians can be contacted at this time if the situation continues to progress for a prolonged period of time despite the supports listed above.

The staff member should stay with the individual if possible until they are settled, or if not possible, in the area to be able to observe the individual and ensure safety.

6. Management of Minor Misbehaviour and Conflict Resolution:

Restorative Practice

The class teacher will deal with issues such as verbal abuse to teachers/other pupils, disobedience, vulgarity, inappropriate gestures and behaviours in the following ways using affective statements and restorative/affective statements e.g.:

Affective Statements:

“It makes me uncomfortable that -----“

“I was shocked when -----“

“I am frustrated that you aren’t listening to me”

Affective Questions:

When Challenging the Behaviour -

What happened?

What were you thinking of at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected by what you have done?

In what way have they been affected?

What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To Help Those Affected

What did you think when you realised what had happened?

What impact has this incident had on you and others?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

What do you need to happen to make things right?

Minor Persistent Misbehaviour Approach

1. Proximity to the child, eye contact or use of body language to alert them to your displeasure with their behaviour.

2. If behaviour persists or escalates speak to the child quietly and ask them to stop and do what they should be doing.

3. If behaviour persists or escalates speak to the child at teacher's table or outside the classroom explaining that their behaviour is not what is expected and explain what is expected.

4. If behaviour persists or escalates the child is deprived of activity (this sanction should not impact their learning e.g Missing PE/Art time/free play time)

Or given an appropriate sanction-5 minute time-out (misbehaviour on yard), linked to the work they have missed out on because of their behaviour.

5. If behaviour persists or escalates the child's parent will be contacted after school.

7. Management of Serious and Persistent Misbehaviour

Following the failure of Affective Statements by the teacher and/ or other restorative approaches such as circles and questions and **if the inappropriate behaviours persist then the sanctions at Level 1 set out below will be put in place:**

Level 1

- Deprivation of special class reward /activity
- Confiscation of object causing the distraction

Further persistence in the above behaviours will require the Principal's attention and involvement of the parents/guardians of the pupil/s concerned.

It may also result in the pupil/family being referred to an outside agency for help and support.

Level 2

Persistent aggressive, threatening, inappropriate, sexualised, bullying behaviour in the school or yard either verbal or physical will be responded to and sanctioned in the following manner:

- Deprivation of special activity related to the offence.
- Meeting with Parent, Child, Principal and Class Teacher
- Behaviour Plan drawn up by Class Teacher and Parent and Pupil
- Weekly Behaviour Report Chart as agreed by Class teacher and Parent
- If this behaviour continues and does not improve despite the use of the above sanctions, then these behaviours are then categorised as **Gross**

Misbehaviour

The Principal at this stage will bring these issues to the attention of the Board of Management for consideration.

8.Management of Gross Misbehaviour

Normally, where other interventions have been tried and not worked, and school staff has reviewed the reasons why they have not worked, Suspension or Expulsion from the school may occur in accordance with procedures set out below. **That aside, in some circumstances where extreme violence has been used there may be grounds for immediate suspension.**

Suspension

Suspension from school means a temporary ban from classes, from the school grounds, from all school related activities such as football matches, tours, trips and other sporting events.

Suspension of a pupil may take place following a serious breach of school rules,

- deliberate acts of violence or aggression

- threatening or intimidating behaviour towards a fellow pupil, member of staff or another person
- deliberate damage to school property
- where there is evidence that exclusion of pupil/s from the school pending remedial action is necessary to protect the health and safety of others in the school
- the behaviour of the pupil has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of another pupil/s.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Various factors will be considered before suspending pupil/s in accordance with National Education Welfare Board Guidelines, including:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is an appropriate response
- The possible impact of suspension

Except in the case of Immediate Suspension (see below), the following procedures will apply to suspension:

Notification and Opportunity to respond

Pupil/s and parents/guardians will be informed in writing about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. They will be given an opportunity (usually at a meeting to which they will be invited) to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. Then if suspension is the only option a second letter will include the following:

- Period of suspension and dates
- Reason for suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- Arrangements for returning to school
- Provision of appeal to the Board of Management
- Provision of an appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills

Period of Suspension

10 days is generally the upper limit placed by the Board of Management on any period of suspension it imposes, except in extraordinary circumstances where a longer period may for compelling reasons be required. The Board of Management will, however, having regard for all the issues at hand, seek to keep the period of suspension to the absolute minimum number of days required to achieve the desired outcome of the sanction.

Normally, suspension will last for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the offence, except in circumstances where the Principal considers that a suspension of longer than three days is needed to achieve a particular objective.

If a suspension of more than 3 days is being proposed, the Principal refers the matter to The Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, the Board of Management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a Board meeting cannot be convened in a timely fashion. A decision by the Principal to suspend may be appealed to the Board of Management.

Immediate Suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for the safety of the pupil/s, other pupil/s, staff and/or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension.

In this case parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for pupil/s to be collected.

The period of an immediate suspension will be communicated to parents/guardians. Such period is deemed to be provisional and subject to review by the Board of Management.

A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of such a suspension, and normal suspension procedures, insofar as they can be observed in these circumstances, will apply.

Rolling suspension

A pupil may be suspended again shortly after they return to school if

- They engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension.
- The standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil

Suspension for Partial School Day

Exclusion of a pupil for part of the school day as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a child from school, as a sanction, is a suspension and will follow guidelines relating to suspension.

Removing/Curtailing Suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove it for any reason, or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed after an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (such appeals only apply where a pupil has been suspended for more than 20 days in the school year – see below)

Report to NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board)

The Principal is required to report all suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4) (a))

Appeals

Where the total numbers of days for which pupil/s have been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parent/guardian may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Return/Reintegration

On returning to school following suspension,

- the parents/guardians of the suspended pupil/s must give written guarantee of good behaviour and agree to pay the costs of any damage to property if relevant.
- Pupil/s must agree to adhere to all school policies and rules governing them.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to set out other appropriate conditions that it deems reasonable in facilitating a return to school.
- The school will help pupil/s to take responsibility to catch up on work missed.
- The class teacher will provide support to pupil/s during the reintegration process.
- Pupil/s will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- A weekly Behaviour Support Chart will be set up for the pupil to be signed by the pupil, his or her parent and the class teacher.

Expulsion

Pupil/s are expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from school.

Expulsion of pupil/s is a very serious step and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management after the school has taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of pupil/s including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents/guardians and pupil/s to try to find ways of helping the pupil/s to change his or her behaviour
- Attempting to ensure that pupil/s understand the possible consequences of his or her behaviour, if it should persist.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the

national Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel pupil/s requires serious grounds such as that:

- Their behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process or
- Their continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety or
- They are responsible for serious damage to property

Where expulsion is considered, school authorities will have tried a series of other interventions and believe that they have exhausted all feasible possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour as per details set out in section 12.3 (page 82) of the NEWB Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools.

Difference between Suspension/Expulsion.

- The degree, seriousness and persistence of the behaviour.
- Where expulsion is considered following a series of interventions that have been tried by the school.
- All possibilities of changing the pupil's behaviour have been exhausted

Expulsion for a First Offence

The Board of Management may form the opinion that pupil/s should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel based on a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of Staff
- Actual violence, physical assault or intimidation
- Either possession of or supplying of illegal drugs to other pupil/s in the school
- Sexual misconduct

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's Recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the Hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

(Details of steps 1 – 6 can be found in section 12.4 on Pages 83 – 86 of NEWB – Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools)

When a decision to expel is taken the NEWB will be notified and given a 20-day period in which to respond. After that period the Board of Management will proceed with the expulsion.

Appeals

A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). The National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil may also bring an appeal.

(Details of steps 1 – 6 can be found in section 12.4 on Pages 83 – 86 of NEWB – Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools)

The Appeals Process

The appeals process under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance. *(Developing a Code of behaviour: Guidelines for Schools NEWB2008)*

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9.Children with Special Educational Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. Please refer to Behaviour of Concern section of this policy for detail on dealing with more challenging behaviour that some pupils with Special Educational Needs may display.

- The school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain expectations.
- Class teachers, Resource teachers and SNAs will check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that children with special educational needs can understand.
- Their understanding of the school's expectations will be checked from time to time, especially where a student with special needs is acting in a way that would usually be seen as being in breach of the school's expectations.
- Some children may need opportunities to practice observing the rules, with feedback on their progress.
- As appropriate, Specialised Behaviour Plans will be put in place in consultation with parents, the Class Teacher, Learning Support / Resource Teacher and or Principal. This will form part of the child's individual programme.
- The school will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. This may result, in some cases, in shortening the school day for an individual child.
- Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times.
- Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.
- The other children in the school or class may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs, to adhere to the Expectations, thus providing peer support.
- This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

10. Code of Behaviour for Parents/Guardians

As the BoM is responsible for the Health and safety of all staff and students, parents are asked to refrain from approaching or reprimanding another person's child on the school premises.

The Board of Management has a duty of care to protect their staff under the Health Safety & Welfare at Work Act 2005. The Board will not tolerate any rude or threatening behaviour towards staff members or another person's child on the school premises.

- Failure to comply with this request may result in an individual being asked to leave the premises and the Board will be informed. In serious cases the Gardaí may be called.

Posting of slanderous comments on social media platforms about members of staff will also be deemed as a serious breach of the Code and may result in the staff member and /or Board taking legal action.

Parents who have a serious difficulty or wish to make a complaint may do so following the Gortaleam N.S Complaints Procedure. Following these procedures is very rare as most difficulties can be resolved locally with the teacher and/or the Principal.

Meetings with teachers and Principal must be by appointment. Every effort will be made to facilitate a meeting with the parent after school. If a parent has an urgent message for teacher, the message may be passed on via telephone call or email.

11. Success Criteria

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy include the following:

- Atmosphere of discipline within the school;
- Children are aware of school rules; Staff apply school rules;

- Growth in self-discipline;
- Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code;
- Comments or compliments on good behaviour;
- Children working to the best of their ability;
- Class working to the best of their ability;
- Improvements in behaviour.

12.References to Other Policies

- **Child Protection Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Complaints Procedure**

Examples of minor misdemeanours include:

Inattentiveness leading to class disruption	Running, pushing, shoving in classroom and corridor, or when lined up in playground.
Interrupting teacher and pupils unnecessarily.	Unsocial behaviour towards others
Fidgeting and unnecessary movement in class and lines.	Interrupting class work
Unfinished, untidy assignment (class work or homework)	Talking in class and in lines
Lack of punctuality	Leaving seat without permission
Littering	Not having homework signed/completed
Chewing gum	Not wearing correct uniform
Lack of sportsmanship (taking part is the important thing)	Not working to full potential
Using unacceptable language	Wearing jewellery/make up (stud/watch only)
	Playing on grass during break. (Only on yard)

Examples of serious misdemeanours include:

Pranks leading to class disruption.	Refusal to do work.
Coming to school unprepared for the work of the day (on recurrence)	Messing and reoccurrence of corrected misdemeanor
Consuming alcohol in school	Verbal abuse between children.
Constant physical interference with other children (lifting, pushing, tripping etc.)	Riding of bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades in the school grounds
Bringing containers made from glass to school.	Being in school building without teacher supervision

Writing and passing of notes in class.	Biting.
Racist remarks	Bad / inappropriate language directed at someone
Uncontrolled behaviour.	Cheek / Defiance of teacher.
Damaging school property	Being in prohibited areas of school without permission
Unauthorised possession or use of a camera/mobile phone in school	Spitting.
Theft	Behaviour likely to cause serious injury to self or others
Physical or verbal assault or threat of assault on any member of staff	Damaging another pupil's property
Constantly disruptive in class	Telling lies
Bringing inappropriate music/literature to school	Unprovoked assault on a pupil – not the result of a clash during sport etc
Throwing stones or other objects (other than a ball at games) in either the play yard or classroom likely to cause injury	Possession of or use of weapons that might constitute a threat to the health and safety of pupils, parents, staff and any other personnel attached to the school
Bullying – though proof would need to be clear.	Drug abuse or dealing in prohibited substances
Smoking in school.	Vandalism
Mitching	Inappropriate behaviour
Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission	Climbing of trees, buildings etc.
	Leaving staff member when on trips outside school