



*Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál  
New Inn,  
Cashel,  
Co. Tipperary E25 VH05*

*Phone/Fax (052) 7462122*

## **Behaviour Policy: Code of Behaviour**

### **Introduction and Rationale:**

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is required by legislation to prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that the school Code of Behaviour must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

### **Mission Statement & the Code of Behaviour:**

In line with our Mission Statement every individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive and supportive atmosphere. We, as a staff, believe our Code of Behaviour has an important role to play in fulfilling these aims and objectives.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, aims to treat every child, irrespective of ability, creed, race or gender, with dignity, fairness and respect. Implementation of this Code of Behaviour is central to the provision of effective teaching and learning in Scoil Mhuire. It is a reflection of our school ethos and central to our Mission Statement.

### **Scoil Mhuire gan Smál's Mission Statement:**

*Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál, New Inn is a Catholic school and we are proud of our tradition which was handed down to us by the Sisters of Mercy, and we still maintain this Mercy ethos. All staff are committed to a holistic approach in developing each child's full potential in a happy, positive and caring Christian environment. We encourage the involvement and support of the parents and the wider community.*

**School Motto "Ar aghaidh linn le chéile"**

### **Where and When the Code of Behaviour will apply:**

This Code of Behaviour will apply to all school activities, regardless of timing and location. This will encompass the normal school day, activities that may extend beyond normal opening and closing times and all extra-curricular activities such as school tours, outings, performances and sporting pursuits.

### **Aims of the Code of Behaviour:**

- to create a safe, secure and positive environment where teaching and learning can occur
- to promote a friendly, happy atmosphere which will help every child to reach their full potential
- to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and consideration for all
- to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline where the children take ownership of their own behaviour
- to help our children to realise that they have choices about the behaviours they exhibit
- to help our children to mature into responsible and full participants in a learning community
- to assist Parents / Guardians in understanding the expectations and procedures that underpin the Code of Behaviour
- to ensure that all procedures of reward or sanction are implemented in a fair manner throughout the school

### **Responsibilities in Relation to Behaviour:**

The teachers and adults encountered by the children in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other. Our example has an important influence on the children.

### **As Teachers and Adults we aim to:**

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- model the good behaviour we expect from the children
- provide a caring and effective teaching and 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 or disability
- show appreciation for the efforts and contributions of all

The children in Scoil Mhuire can help enormously to make our school a positive, happy and effective learning environment by adhering to the school rules.

The Parents and Guardians of the children in Scoil Mhuire have the responsibility to ensure that their children abide by the expectations outlined in this Code of Discipline.

**All Parents and Guardians should aim to:**

- familiarise themselves with Scoil Mhuire gan Smál's Code of Behaviour and discuss same with their child
- encourage their child to abide by the school rules
- encourage punctuality every day
- encourage full attendance
- label their child's belongings for easy identification
- support their child with their homework and sign their Homework Journal
- inform their child's class teacher about illnesses / school absences in writing
- ensure their child is wearing their full school uniform / tracksuit
- ensure their child is eating a healthy lunch in accordance with our Healthy Eating Policy
- encourage good behaviour and respect for others at all times
- communicate with their child's teacher about factors likely to affect their child's behaviour in school
- make an appointment to meet with a teacher / the Principal with the Secretary
- Refrain from parking in the bus bay or on the footpath near the entrance or exit to the carpark, which restricts the access and view for the buses.
- Refrain from bringing family pets into the school yard.
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & safety of all staff & students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

**Guidelines for Positive School Behaviour**

The following standards of behaviour are expected of all members of the Scoil Mhuire gan Smál's community.

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for school property and buildings
- Respect for other children's property
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Walk quietly in the school buildings
- Do their best in all activities
- Listen to those who are speaking, including visitors to their classroom
- Be kind and show a willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners at all times

### **Classroom Behaviour:**

Each teacher will have a set of expected classroom behaviours for his/her class level. Some teachers, for example in the senior classes, may draft a list of class rules with the help of the children in their class. Class rules should be kept to a minimum of 4 or 5. Class rules should emphasise positive behaviour e.g. 'walk' and not 'don't run'. The following general behaviours apply to all classes.

- Co-operate fully with your Teacher's / SNA's / Substitute Teacher's instructions
- Complete your work to the best of your ability
- Present your work neatly in books and copies
- Get on with your work and let others get on with theirs
- Be punctual
- Enter and leave your classroom quietly
- Ask permission before leaving your classroom
- Complete all Homework to the best of your ability
- Help to tidy up your classroom at hometime every day
- Wear your full school uniform / tracksuit when appropriate
- Eat a healthy lunch every day

### **Behaviour on the Yard at Break-Times:**

Children have the opportunity to play and socialise with each other at morning and lunch break-times. The following points will help to keep the children safe on the yard.

- Children are encouraged to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- All age groups have a designated play area and should remain in that yard
- Children should never leave the school grounds
- Children eat their lunch in their classroom before break times

- Children must ask permission from a supervising teacher / SNA to leave the yard e.g. going to the toilet.
- Children with injuries will be treated by the teacher/SNA on duty
- Serious injuries (e.g. bangs to head, cuts, bruising) will be recorded in the Incident Book (this is kept in the secretary's office) and the class teacher will be informed of such injuries at the end of break. Teachers will inform Parents/Guardians if the secretary has not already contacted the parents by phone
- Children are encouraged to be fair and inclusive when setting up their games
- Rough play and bad language are not allowed at any time

### **Behaviour for Indoor Play:**

On wet days the children will remain in their classrooms during break-times. The following points will help to keep the children safe on these occasions.

- Children will stay in their classrooms at all times
- Children can play with games / activities provided/complete wet day worksheets/watch DVD/participate in GoNoodle
- Students from the student council will be assigned to younger classrooms. They can play with the children, read stories, play games on the whiteboard etc.
- The teacher on duty on wet days will circulate between the rooms
- SNAs will help supervising the classes of the children they work with on wet days

### **Behaviour on the Yard before school day starts:**

The board of Management of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál only accepts responsibility for pupils from 9.20am. There is a teacher and SNA on supervision when the bell rings and the teacher on duty will allow them to proceed quietly to their classrooms. Some mornings the Active Schools Committee will lead the pupils in a morning exercise routine.

### **Behaviour and Procedures on Wet Mornings:**

If it is a wet morning the children should wait in the colonnade until the teacher on duty lets them into school.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour:**

#### **“Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh sí”**

Part of the vision of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 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 that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solving problems. All children deserve encouragement to attain their personal best. Our reward systems seek to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by all adults in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál. Praise for good behaviour should be as high as for good work.

**The following are examples of how praise will be given:**

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in child's copy / Homework Journal
- A visit to another teacher / Principal for commendation
- Words of praise in front of class / bualadh bos
- Words of praise after yard in front of whole school
- Delegating some special responsibility of privilege
- A mention to Parents/Guardians, written/verbal communication

### **Rewards and Incentives for Positive Behaviour:**

Greater emphasis is placed on rewards than on sanctions. **This is not an exhaustive list.** Rewards may include the following.

- Stamps / stickers / points / dojos
- Traffic lights more commonly used in Junior classes
- Homework passes
- Golden time
- Class / group of the week / points systems
- Assembly / class of the month
- Certificates / prizes / rewards

### **Unacceptable Behaviour:**

Three levels of Misbehaviour are recognised: **minor, serious and gross**. All everyday instances of **minor misbehaviours** will be dealt with by the class teacher or the supervising teacher at break-times.

#### **Examples of Minor Misbehaviours include:**

- Interrupting work in the classroom
- Being discourteous / unmannerly
- Running in the corridors
- Rough play on the yard
- Leaving the classroom without checking with the class teacher
- Leaving the yard to go indoors at break times without checking with the supervising teacher / SNA
- Not wearing full school uniform
- Not adhering to Healthy Lunch Policy
- Being late in the mornings
- Having unfinished Homework
- Keeping a mobile phone in their bag during class time

Class teachers will keep a **running record of minor misbehaviours**. If a pattern of minor misbehaviours appears, the class teacher may inform Parents/Guardians.

### **Serious Misbehaviours:**

**Single instances of serious misbehaviour** will be dealt with by the class teacher in conjunction with the Deputy Principal / Principal. Any single incident may be brought to the Parent/Guardian's attention at the discretion of the Deputy Principal / Principal.

In cases of **repeated serious misbehaviours** Parents/Guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the class teacher and Deputy Principal / Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

#### **Examples of Serious Misbehaviours include:**

- Behaviour that is hurtful including threats, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation
- Using violent and/or aggressive behaviour towards others

- Verbal abuse of a teacher / adult
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning on a daily basis
- Damage to school property
- Theft
- Using a mobile phone at school / taking photographs

### **Gross Misbehaviours:**

Parents / Guardians will be informed immediately by the Principal if there is **one incident of gross misbehaviour**.

**Examples of Gross Misbehaviours include:**

- Physical abuse of a teacher / adult / other child
- Serious aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher / adult / other child
- Bringing dangerous implements to school
- Leaving the school without permission
- Serious damage to property e.g. structural damage to school building, broken window
- Bullying over a prolonged period of time after earlier interventions
- Carrying drugs / alcohol / cigarettes / dangerous substances

### **Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour:**

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

- learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- see that their behaviour affects others
- understand that they have choices about their behaviour
- understand that their choices have consequences
- learn to take responsibility for their choices / behaviours
- discuss and devise strategies to prevent the behaviour occurring again

**Sanctions should:**

- reinforce the Code of Behaviour
- signal to other children that their wellbeing is being protected
- prevent serious disruption of Teaching and Learning
- be clear so that the child understands why the sanction is being applied

- make it clear that changes in behaviour are needed to avoid further sanctions
- make a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- relate to an individual and not a group
- focus on the child's behaviour not on the child himself/herself

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. Individual teachers may put alternative measures in place depending on the circumstances involved and the age of the child. **This list is not exhaustive.**

#### **The Class Teacher will:**

- ask the child to stop the behaviour
- discuss behaviour and reason with child
- advise child on how to improve the behaviour
- ask the child to move away from his/her class group to consider the behaviour
- ask the child go to a nearby class to consider his/her behaviour
- loss of privileges e.g. golden time / free play / activities / representing the school / attendance on a school trip / tour
- ask the child to write down their account of behaviour
- inform the Principal about on-going behaviour
- communicate with Parents/Guardians in Journal
- make an appointment with Parents/Guardians
- make an appointment with the Principal and Parents/Guardians

When all of the above has been exhausted then the matter will be referred to the Board of Management where;

- BOM will consider Suspension
- BOM will consider Expulsion

#### **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as 'requiring a student to absent himself / herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days' (NEWB Guidelines)

Exclusion for part of a school day or asking Parents/Guardians to keep a child from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension. Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a child has engaged in a serious or gross misbehaviour. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the

behaviour that is causing concern, a single instance of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

- The seriously detrimental effect on the Education of the other children of the child's behaviour to date
- Whether the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to Health and safety
- The child is responsible for serious damage to property

The purpose of the suspension is to give the child / Parent / Guardian / Staff time to consider the child's actions and to consider the implications for the other children in the class group. It will also provide the school with time to devise ways to help the child improve the child's behaviour in the future.

The Principal can suspend a child for periods of up to three days. If a longer suspension is proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB Guidelines.

## **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a child. This authority will be exercised in line with the procedures outlined in the Development of a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools NEWB.

(See appendix A & B)

## **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, Parents / Guardians are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some decisions of the BOM, including suspension and expulsion.

(See appendix C )

### **Bullying:**

Please refer to Scoil Mhuire gan Smál's Anti-Bullying Policy

### **Communicating with Parents and Guardians:**

Communicating with Parents/Guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy which can be implemented at home and at school. A high level of co-operation and open communication is an important factor which encourages positive behaviour in the school.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál encourages Parents to talk in confidence to teachers and/or Principal about any significant development in their child's life which may affect their child's behaviour.

### **The following methods of Communication are used:**

- Informal / formal Parent / Teacher Meetings
- Notes in Homework Journals (not Junior and Senior Infants)
- Letters / notes to and from school
- Scoil Mhuire website
- Email / text messaging

The Parents and Guardians of any new children starting in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál will be provided with a copy of our Code of Behaviour. Most of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál's Policies are on our website [www.newinngirlsschool.ie](http://www.newinngirlsschool.ie)

### **Record Keeping:**

It is very important that all incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and kept up to date. Patterns of poor behaviour can be spotted early and interventions (e.g. an Individual Behaviour Plan ) can be put in place as soon as possible.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management

**Signed Breda Hickey**

Chairperson, B.O.M.

Date: 1/4/2019

Review date 2023

## **Appendix A**

### **Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student**

#### **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the intervention tried?

#### **The context of the behaviour**

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

#### **The impact of the behaviour**

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

### The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

### Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

### The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peer?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements

## **Appendix B**

### **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.

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.

**Due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board meeting will be given to parents.**

**Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal**

- Inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Parents should be informed in **writing** of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done.
- Parents and the student must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, before a sanction is imposed.
- If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

## **Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should:

- Ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

## **Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations; and the holding of a hearing**

- It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and ensure that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. No party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case, is part of the Board of Management's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student)

- Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed question the evidence of the other party directly. The Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial.
- After both sides have been heard, The Board should ensure that the **Principal and parents** are not present for the Board's deliberations.

#### **Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing**

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- The Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
- An appeal against an expulsion under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with Section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse.
- The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. The parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer**

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24*)
- The purpose of the consultations and the meetings is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education.
- Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

### **Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel**

- Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel.
- Parents and the student should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

## **Appendix C**

- A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department and Science (*Educational Act 1998* section 29) An appeal may also be brought by the National educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

### **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).