

Code of Behaviour.

Children's Version

- **Classroom**

1. We are ready for class.
2. We allow everyone to learn in school.
3. We are kind to others and tell the truth.
4. We look after property.
5. We do our best at school!

At Playtime

6. We are gentle, we don't hurt others.
7. We are kind, we don't hurt others' feelings.
8. We are allowed to play in a game if we keep the rules of the game.
9. We follow instructions from the adults on the playground.

Rationale:

It was necessary to review the existing Code of Behaviour for the following reasons

- to take into account the changing educational requirements and to bring it in line with the National Education Welfare Board – Developing Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools (2008).
- As part of our School Self-Evaluation focus on Wellbeing, particularly the Key Area of *Culture and Environment*.

Table 7: Wellbeing Promotion Indicators of Success

Key Areas	Indicators of Success
Culture & Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.• Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.

Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 says a code of behaviour shall specify —

- (a) the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- (b) the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- (c) the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- (d) the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- (e) the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Scoil Asicus are:

- To allow us achieve our vision for a school which is safe physically and emotionally for all and where everyone is supported to learn.
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To maintain good order throughout the school and respect for the school environment.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption and provide a stimulating learning environment.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

General Guidelines for School Rules to promote Positive Behaviour

1. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
2. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and undamaged.
3. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
4. Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
5. Pupils must take correction from all staff members.
6. Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.
7. Pupils must walk in an orderly manner on entering and exiting the school using the school gate.
8. Full uniform / school tracksuit must be worn every day.
9. We emphasise that pupils must walk in an orderly manner in corridors, going to and from yard, hall, church etc. Children should stand back to allow staff or visitors pass in the corridor or doorway.
10. We emphasise that when entering a room, pupils should knock, walk in and address the staff member in a polite manner.
11. Pupils should walk to gates and enter/exit through gates at all times.
12. A note from parents/guardians is required when a parent wishes his/her child to leave during school hours.

13. Bad language is not acceptable and sanctions will be imposed. The use of such language or cheek towards a teacher or member of staff will be regarded as a very serious misdemeanour, undermining the teacher's authority.

Playground

1. Children should play within the areas allotted to their own particular group.
2. Pupils must play safely at all times. Anti-social, dangerous or hurtful behaviour is forbidden, (e.g. wrestling, headlocks, piggybacks, bullying, intimidation, teasing, jeering, fighting, spitting, kicking, charging in groups, bad language, exclusion)
3. It is essential for pupils to keep the school grounds tidy. Children must not throw litter around.
4. Under no circumstances must a pupil leave the school grounds without permission.
5. Pupils must obey the bell promptly.
6. Pupils must vacate the school buildings at break times except on wet days. If for any reason a parent wishes a child to remain indoors at break, a note to that effect must be sent to the teacher. On wet days, children remain seated inside and play or chat with their classmates.

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that **the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils** before official supervision time of **8.45am** or after the official closing time of **1.35p.m. (infants) 2.35 p.m. (other classes)** except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Bullying

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. (Bí Cineálta Guidelines 2024)

Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

See anti-bullying policy

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies/Incentives

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.

- Praise in front of class group / school assembly.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.

Discouraging Misbehaviour –

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and to discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Reasoning with pupil.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Prescribing extra work.
- Loss of privileges, which would not include curricular areas.
- “Breach of Code of Behaviour” forms, outlining misdemeanour and sent home to be signed by parents.
- Children in Middle / Senior classes may be asked to document misdemeanour/s which will be signed by parents/guardians.
- Communication with parents
- Referral to principal
- Meeting with parents, attended by teacher and principal.
- Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour and suspension is being considered, the Chairperson of the BOM will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet with the Chairperson and/ or Principal.
- 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

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. The authority has been delegated to the Principal in writing. The Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for his or her use of this authority.

Suspension is defined as “Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified limited period of school days.” We adopt guidelines of TUSLA and here is a summary.

Procedures adopted:

- Outlined above general school procedures.
- Parents asked to come and collect child, meet with the Principal and the parents have an opportunity to respond.
- Letter is presented to parent (sample in policy).

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years,

may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to undertake such an appeal. Suspension may occur immediately in the case of exceptional circumstances. Initially the maximum period will be three school days. A further period of exclusion above three school days may be imposed in more serious circumstances. If misbehaviour continues the B.O.M. may authorise a further period of exclusion while the matter is being reviewed.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. As part of the code of behaviour, the Board of Management will follow the following procedures as laid down in the TUSLA guidelines (Chapter 12), and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

Authority to expel

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority will be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated. See *Appendix on Expulsion of Students*.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.

- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

Children should be encouraged to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others and for property.

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- 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 others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

The Behaviour code will be communicated to the pupils through SPHE lessons and as part of our whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour in our school. We believe this process will encourage ownership of the Code of Behaviour and as a result will foster personal responsibility.

Class Rules: to be drawn up by each class teacher in consultation with pupils and to be displayed visually in the classroom.

Signed:

Chairperson: _____

Date:

Appendix on Expulsion of Students.

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- 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, Tusla Education Support Service, etc.)

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

'Automatic' expulsion

A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student. (See Chapter 12 page 82 National Education Welfare Board – Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools)

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student (see TUSLA Guidelines 10.3 and 10.4 for further information about fair procedures). Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that may warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

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

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal should:

- 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. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

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, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents is essential. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.

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:

- inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

- 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 recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board’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. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other’s presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

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. Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The Board of Management should refer to TUSLA – Child and Family Agency reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational

Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, s4A).

The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, 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 meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. 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 (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. 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.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by TUSLA – Child and Family Agency 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). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

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