



*Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa,
Two-Mile-Borris,
Thurles,
Co. Tipperary.*

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

Our Code of Conduct Policy was reviewed and updated on 13th February 2009 to become our Code of Behaviour policy. All staff members were involved in the review of this policy.

Rationale

It is necessary to draft a policy that reflects the aspirations of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB Guidelines 2008. This policy specifies the requirements for students attending Scoil Mochaomhog Naofa.

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

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The policy of this school is concerned with the total development of the child. School and personal discipline are an integral part of achieving this policy. The need to involve parents and pupils with teachers in the achievement of this aim is of crucial importance. Our aim is to implement this policy in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner and in devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each

child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment. Every effort will be made by the school to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers the framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by the Staff.

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, pupils and parents. Children must be able to attend school without fear of being bullied or intimidated. The school can more easily implement a policy on behaviour and discipline with the support of the parents. Communication with parents throughout the child's years in primary school is vital for his/her progress and overall development. This is a "Listening School" i.e. a child's fears, anxieties or worries will always be listened to and acted upon.

The B.O.M. has the ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The school's policy documents have been drawn up and agreed by Staff, B.O.M., Parents' Association, parents and pupils from the senior classes 4th, 5th & 6th. These policies are held in the office and are available to parents on request.

AIMS

Our aims include:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Content of Policy

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

We aim to teach our students the importance of self-discipline. In order that we can learn properly, get on well together and be safe and happy the school expects that each student will:

- ❖ Be kind, helpful and show consideration for others.
- ❖ Be truthful. Respect and obey your teachers.
- ❖ Do your best to do your class work and homework.
- ❖ Play safely and remain in designated areas as defined in the school yard.
- ❖ Come to school every day and arrive on time.
- ❖ Bring all the things you need for school every day.
- ❖ Walk in file quietly and in an orderly way when moving around the school.
- ❖ Treat your school environment and school property with care.

- ❖ Only leave the school during the school day when your parent/minder is there to collect your.

Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

Within SMN the emphasis is placed on promoting a positive atmosphere and the cultivation of positive relationships between pupils, teachers and parents. All staff should be aware of the content of this policy. Positive behaviour will be actively promoted through the SPHE Curriculum. Furthermore, teachers and pupils will work together to draft and agree classroom rules that reflect the broader aims of the Code of Behaviour. Emphasis will be placed on rewards rather than sanctions.

The BOM will support the teaching staff and pupils, in the creation of a positive school atmosphere by acknowledging, endorsing and upholding the principles of the Code of Behaviour. Where possible the BOM will support initiatives that enable the teachers to engage in professional development which will benefit the promotion of positive behaviour. In exceptional circumstances the BOM will be required to actively engage with the school team in dealing with serious breaches of discipline.

Parents are seen as active partners in the education of their children. Each year the school rules will be communicated to all parents who will be asked to sign them and to cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions. Furthermore, an evaluation of each pupils behaviour will be communicated to parents through the annual parent teacher meeting and the school report card.

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa promotes a code of positive behaviour and affirms such with a range of incentives. Each class teacher with his/her pupils establishes a code for their room at the beginning of the school year. This code is displayed in a prominent position in the room. Praise and encouragement is recognised as an integral part of affirming positive behaviour.

- Comments and smiley faces on children's work
- Stickers, badges or ink stamps on books.
- Specially written note home.
- Photographs of award winners taken and displayed.
- Homework pass.
- Good news bulletin board.
- Certificate or merit awards.

Our playground is divided in to four zones. Children are allocated to each zone based on their class and all pupils are required to stay within their zone until the end of break time. The playground is supervised by a teacher and all Special Needs Assistants assist in the integration of pupils who experience Special educational needs during playtime. The role of the SNA is of great importance in monitoring and assessing situations and in attempting to diffuse behavioural issues before they escalate. On wet days pupils stay in their classrooms. Pupils are expected to stay seated and engage in board games or other wet day activities. Behavioural issues that arise during playtime are recorded in the Incident Notebook and communicated to the class teacher.

Strategies and sanctions for dealing with misbehaviour

Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofaq recognises that it is accepted that there is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. Listed below are our sets of graded sanctions, which contain a degree of flexibility to take account of individual circumstances:

- Correction by class teacher – speak to the child, remind the child of the rule which is being broken and encourage him/her to keep this rule.
- Temporary separation from peers or “Time Out”
- Time out in another class
- Loss of privileges because of disruption to others.
- Detention at 11 o’ clock break for pupils who continue to commit misdemeanours, serious misdemeanours or gross misbehaviour in classroom or playground. Such pupils will remain inside under supervision of the teacher assigned to detention duty. Pupils will complete detention form to help them to reflect on their behaviour. Detention forms will then be sent home to be signed by parent or guardian.
- If there is no improvement in behaviour parents will be contacted by class teacher and asked for their support.
- Referral to principal.
- When all else fails the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. We recognise that some children may exhibit very challenging behaviour. When faced with these potentially strong outbursts and or potentially violent situations the following steps may be taken to help de-escalate the situation.

Support for child experiencing behavioural difficulties:

Every effort will be made to support the child and the family experiencing behavioural difficulties. Children will be referred to relevant professionals for assessment/support as soon as possible.

Management of Serious Incidents:

- At all times efforts will be made to divert or prevent the occurrence of serious out bursts / violent episodes.
- Where possible the child should be isolated. This may involve the pupil being exited from the classroom or the yard, with an S.N.A. if applicable or with the assistance of another. Alternatively the rest of the class may be removed from the unsafe situation if the child in question is refusing to exit.
- The pupil should then be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully. All attempts will be made to reason with the pupil in question.
- The teacher/S.N.A. or other present should stay at a safe distance.
- The teacher/S.N.A. or other present should make it clear that they are listening to the pupil.
- The pupil should be asked to consider positive outcomes and behaviours.

- The pupil should be given space and time to cool off and to respond to requests.
- If in emergency situations where the pupil poses a danger to themselves or others or does not respond positively to the requests of teachers/S.N.A. or others he/she may be contained and brought to a separate room to protect their own safety and the safety of the other children.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified as soon as possible and requested to come to the school.

Recording / Investigation of Incidents

In this school we record serious incidents on a report sheet. Details of the incident are recorded as soon as possible after taking place. All relevant details should be recorded including time, date, location, people present, the nature of the incident and the sequence of events.

Consequences of Serious Incidents

As detailed above every effort will be made to ensure serious incidents are prevented. Where serious incidents occur the following strategies may be used

- Talking to and debriefing the child, affected members of staff and parents after the incident
- Removal of the child by the parent for the remainder of the day

Suspension

- Suspension may be used as a measured response to a serious incident. Suspension will be considered on serious grounds e.g. when
 1. the pupils behaviour has had /or is having a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
 2. the pupils presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
 3. the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property / another person

Suspension will be no more than three days without the approval of the Board of Management.

A thorough investigation will be carried out prior to any suspension being imposed.

Where a child has been suspended, it may be considered to bring him/her back to school on the day prior to the end of suspension, for some restricted time e.g. resource hours to aid the full return to school.

Prior to the return to school a meeting will be held with the parents, the principal and all of those involved in the incident.

Parents have a right to appeal suspensions as per the NEWB guidelines.

Expulsion

Here in Scoil Mochaomhog Naofa, expulsion will only be used in the event of extremely grave misdemeanours. A decision to permanently exclude a student may only be taken by the Board of Management and will follow the guidelines established by the NEWB *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (2008, PG. 80 - 87).

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

Appeals

In the event of an expulsion, the Board of Management will inform parents of their right to appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. Furthermore, parents will be briefed of their right to appeal decisions to expel students to the Board of Management.

Keeping Records

In this school, serious incidents that occur during break times are recorded in the Yard Duty Notebook. All incidents are recorded in a factual and impartial manner. Information gathered in this notebook is monitored and analysed and the principal and the teachers will address necessary recurring behavioural problems. Within each classroom teachers are encouraged to record and acknowledge positive behaviour through the use of star cards, charts etc. Where detention is utilised as a sanction, a record is kept of all work completed by the students.

Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

Pupils attending Scoil Mochaomhog Naofa are encouraged to be punctual. Good attendance is acknowledged through the presentation of a certificate applauding full attendance and through the end of year report. Where students are absent parents are requested to sign and return an Attendance Form indicating the number of days missed and the reason for the absence. This information is subsequently forwarded to the NEWB. At the start of each school year parents are informed of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

Reference to other policies

The following policies have a bearing on our Code of Behaviour

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Health & Safety
- Attendance

Success Criteria

The success of the policy will be based on:

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

Roles and Responsibility

The BOM, principal, staff, SNA's, pupils and parents all have a role to play in this policy.

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented in May 2009.

Timetable for Review

This policy was reviewed in February 09 will be reviewed again at a suitable time in accordance with our Plan of Action and Review Timetable which are in our School Plan.