

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement:

The Code of Behaviour of Cloontuskert N.S. reflects the vision and values of our school, its patron and the National Education Welfare Board Guidelines for schools. The code was developed in consultation with the staff and Board of Management, and in compliance with section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. It translates the expectations of the school community into practical arrangements, routines and procedures which ensure that its aims are implemented and that the particular needs and circumstances of our school and community are met.

The purpose of this policy:

To promote positive behaviour and to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school:

Our school strives to provide a well-structured, caring, happy and secure environment for the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils. Cloontuskert N.S. will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to instil in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the ideal of being responsible. This can only be achieved when there is a high level of respect and cooperation between staff, parents and pupils.

Principles underpinning an effective code

Aims:

- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement.
 - To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- 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 school community.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their cooperation 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. ***Expectations for the***

Whole School Community: -

No staff member/parent/pupil or any other member of the School Community will misuse any form of Tobacco/alcohol/solvent or illegal drugs while on the school premises.

Expectations for pupils:

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The Education Welfare Act, section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify 'the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school'. Each pupil is:

- Encouraged to develop self-respect.
- Expected to be well behaved and to treat staff, their fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Expected to show respect for the property of the school and keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Expected to be responsible for their own belongings and to respect other children's property.
- Expected to attend school on a regular basis and be punctual.
- Expected to wear full school uniform every day.
- Expected to do his/her best in both schoolwork and homework.
- Expected to obey the instructions of any member of the school staff while in school or during school related activities.
- Expected to obey school rules at all times.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Support and supplement 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 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.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in our school. The BOM is:

- Supportive of the Principal in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school.
- Supports decisions of the staff based on the policies they have ratified.
- Supports the staff, parents and pupils by acknowledging the rights of everyone in the school community and ensuring the well being of everybody.
- Supports the staff by ensuring that teachers have all the necessary resources for development

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians play an important role in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by:

- Encourage their children to have a sense of respect for themselves 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.

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- 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.

- Ensuring children are in school and are collected on time.
- Attending meetings at the school if requested.
- Helping children with homework and ensuring that it is completed.
- Ensuring children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Ensuring children wear full school uniform.

The following are the school rules for pupils:

Rules for inside school

Everyone must be able to work in a positive working environment.

- Respect all pupils, staff and visitors to the school.
- Use respectful language.
- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Show consideration and be helpful to other pupils and adults.
- Listen carefully and follow instructions.
- Be a good worker and work to your potential.
- Have all books, copies, pencils, etc, necessary to do their work properly.
- Be willing to tidy up and be responsible for your own and the school equipment.
- Walk carefully and quietly within the school.
- When going to another room remember to knock, enter and wait for the teacher to speak to you.
- Lunches should be healthy.

Rules for break times outside:

- Stay in the playground unless you have permission to leave.
- Include others in your play.
- Line up carefully at the end of playtime.
- Use play equipment properly and safely
- Return play equipment at the end of break.
- Play suitable games – don't fight, tease or bully.
- Keep the school grounds clean and tidy.

Restricted Areas:

The following are restricted areas unless directed by a member of staff to go there.

1. Principal's Office
2. Cleaner's/Caretaker's Room
3. Staff Room during lunch and break times unless under the direction of a member of staff.
Pupils must knock on Staff Room door and wait to be admitted.
4. Area behind fence at end of main playing pitch.
5. The front of the school during break times.
6. Playing pitch during winter or inclement weather.

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7. P.E. Store unless directed to enter by teacher.
8. Classrooms during break-times and in the period before and after school except with the permission of a member of staff.

Teachers and pupils will work together to discuss these rules and may further develop them through their class rules.

Attendance at school is very important for every child. If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, please inform the school in writing. Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, schools are legally obliged to report any absences of 20 days or more to Tusla.

Promoting positive Behaviour

- Verbal praise.
- Written comments in copies and diaries.
- Trophies and medals
- Positive comment to parents.
- Displaying of pupils work in school.
- Stickers, Stars, Golden Time, homework vouchers, certificates etc.
- Good school & class routines.
- Discussion with pupils on how to prevent unacceptable behaviour

School day and attendance

- School hours are from 9.10am/9.20am until 2.50pm/3.00pm (infants 2.00pm) with two twenty minute breaks at 11.00am and 1pm. Infants should be collected at 2.00pm. Pupils are required to be regular and punctual in their attendance at school. Pupils are not allowed to leave the school grounds between 9.10am and 3.00pm unless for specific school related activities where written permission or personal attendance of parent(s) will be required.

School books and equipment

- The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss of pupil's property. Items of clothing etc, should be clearly marked.
- Pupils should be equipped with the books prescribed by their teacher. All books should be kept in good condition and covered. Graffiti on textbooks and copybooks is not allowed.
- Pupils are expected to bring to school each day the necessary books and equipment for each particular day's work.

Homework

- It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis.
- Homework re-enforces the work done in school and is therefore an essential part of the learning process. Homework should be done promptly, completely and neatly. Parents should sign the homework diary/copy each night to confirm that all the homework has been completed. This may include memorisation, written assignments or other tasks. If for some reason homework (or any part of it) cannot be completed parents are asked to note this in the homework diary/copy.

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Dress and appearance

- Pupils should wear school uniform in school. Appropriate clothing should be provided for games, P.E., classes and all outdoor activities. Pupils are expected to be clean, neat, tidy in dress and appearance. Hair style must be conventional.

Mobile phones are not allowed in school. The school telephone is available when the need arises.

Sanctions:

Sometimes despite promoting positive behaviour, children may break the rules. Strategies are put in place to discourage inappropriate behaviour. Teachers will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupil.

1. Verbal reprimand.
2. Removal from group/time out.
3. Child sent to another classroom if being disruptive.
4. Completing school work during break time and/or at home.
5. Report to Principal
6. Communication with Parents;
 - Note on homework notebook.
 - Letter to parent/guardian/teacher.
 - Personal contact with teacher.
 - Personal contact with Principal.
 - Contact with Board of Management in the form of written submission.
7. Walking with the teacher on yard duty.
8. Withdrawal of privileges.
9. Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group.
10. Not being allowed to go on a school trip.
11. Report to BOM
12. Suspension.
13. Expulsion.

Sanctions will be at the teacher/Principal's discretion and will be appropriate to the severity of the misdemeanour. The class teacher will initially apply the sanctions. Depending on the gravity of the situation, the Principal may be involved. Parents will be involved at the appropriate stage. If all other options have been explored the Board of Management will be contacted.

Strategies to prevent escalation of misbehaviour

- a nonverbal signal such as a look or a frown
- change in tone of voice
- stop speaking and wait for attention
- overlook or ignore the undesirable behaviour if the child is not a threat to themselves or others
- move the child to another seat
- speak to the child, remind the child of the rule which is being broken and encourage him/her to keep the rule
- circle time / SPHE classes are used to discuss behaviour and to promote positive behaviour

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Parents/guardians are asked to contact the school if they have concerns regarding their child. Early intervention is imperative to prevent escalation of misbehaviour.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

The following strategies are used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems:

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment through the SENO.
- Appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).
- S.E.N. personnel act as mentors for particular children and assist teachers in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children.
- The school will, if necessary, include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour. (See Physical Intervention Policy in Health and Safety Statement).
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the child may be temporarily excluded from the school while consultation with the SENO takes place.

Suspension

Suspension is defined as: *Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'*

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour which is causing concern. Due cognisance is taken of children with special needs.

The decision to suspend requires serious grounds such as;

- Student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Procedures

We use fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student.

- We inform the student and the parent/guardian about the complaint.
- All other means of dealing with the behaviour have been tried.
- There has been previous communication with parents regarding misbehaviour, all of which will be documented by those involved.

- We give parents and student a chance to respond.
- Parents are invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude.
- The Board of Management will be consulted when the Principal feels suspension may be warranted.
- Throughout this process the children have a right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

The Period of Suspension:

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- A student should not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances, where the Principal considers that a longer period is necessary and the Board approves.
- In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.
- The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

Implementing the Suspension

If suspension is still decided upon the Principal notifies parent/guardian in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reason for the suspension.
- Any programme to be followed.
- Any arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and parents.
- The provision for appeal to the Board of Management or Secretary General of the DES.
Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parent/guardian may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education act 1998, as amended by the education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007

Grounds for Removal of Suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management (B.O.M.) 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.

When the period of Suspension is over, every effort will be made to accommodate the smooth reintegration of the student.

Expulsion

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated. Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour and will only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Grounds include:

- 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.
- A single serious incident.

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- 3 previous suspensions and continued misbehaviour.

Procedures: (Fair procedures/right to be heard)

- Detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal (includes contacting parents re behaviour as with suspension).
- Recommendation to the BOM by the Principal (parents informed of the same)
- Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation/and the holding of a hearing.
- BOM deliberation and actions following the hearing (inc. informing Tusla. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date the EWO receives the written notification.)
- Consultations arranged by the EWO (BOM may consider suspending the student during this period if good order/H+S is threatened by the presence of the student).
- Confirmation of decision to expel-letter to parents containing information on their right to appeal.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including

- (1) permanent exclusion from a school and
- (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one year.

Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

The Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

Reference to other policies

The following school policies also have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour

- SPHE
- Anti-Bullying
- Enrolment
- Health and Safety
- Special Education Needs

Ratification, Review and Communication

This plan will be presented at the next BOM meeting for ratification and will be sequentially communicated to the relevant parties. It will be reviewed in November 2022 and amended if necessary.

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