



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

# Scoil Oilibhéir Code of Behaviour

### Introductory statement

The Code of Behaviour was audited and reviewed during 2008/2009 school year in line with NEWB guidelines. The entire school community including Board of Management, principal, teachers, other school staff, parents and pupils were consulted. A committee of six including deputy principal, three staff members, one Board of Management representative and one parent representative, was set up in May 2009 to coordinate this audit and review. Work on the code continued in the 2009/2010 school year.

### Rationale

Scoil Oilibhéir decided to review its code of behaviour because;

- The existing policy is due for review and amendment in order to make it compliant with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*
- It was identified as a priority area by the staff
- It is a requirement under [DES Circular 20/09](#) on school discipline that the code of behaviour shall specify:
  - a. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school
  - b. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil refuses to observe those standards
  - c. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from Scoil Oilibhéir
  - d. The grounds for removing a suspension in relation to a pupil
  - e. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

### Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

#### Mission statement

Our Code of Behaviour reflects the values and ethos outlined in our Mission Statement:

*Scoil Oilibhéir aims to nurture responsible, capable, resourceful and caring people, who live their lives in a Christian way, respecting and valuing difference. This whole school experience will foster both a love of learning and an awareness of our culture and traditions, thus enabling all who learn and work here to live good and wholesome lives.*



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

The staff of Scoil Oilibhéir aim:

- To enable the children to grow and live their life in a Christian way
- To foster courtesy, respect and a friendly atmosphere in which difference is valued and where staff and children can develop
- To provide interesting and graded work schemes and to establish in the children good working habits.

### Aims

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

- 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 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 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 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

## **1.Guidelines for Behaviour in Scoil Oilibhéir**

Scoil Oilibhéir is a place where high standards of behaviour are expected and adhered to. The school standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for learning. They describe the behaviour expected from all members of our school community. The standards of behaviour signal positive values such as:

- Respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

The Standards expect all members of the school community to behave in ways that show respect for others. The school and classroom rules translate standards into practical guidance about the behaviour expected of pupils. Rules provide clear boundaries. They describe in simple terms how to behave in order to learn well and to develop into mature responsible individuals.

The terms **Expectations** and **Rules** will be used in this document. One of the benefits of using the term expectations is that expectations can be described for parents and staff as well as pupils.

While the standards are common to everyone in the school, rules/expectations will reflect the age and stage of development of the pupils.

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Class teachers and specialist personnel (such as the Learning Support Teachers, Resource Teachers, Special Needs Assistants) will check that standards and expectations are communicated in a way that pupils with special educational needs can understand.

### **The Behaviour that is expected from pupils in Scoil Oilibheir is as follows:**

#### **Expectations of pupils:**

#### **The school expects that pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly and not miss days without good reason. When returning after an absence pupils should present a written explanation.
- Always be in school before the bell rings (at 8.55a.m.)
- Enter and exit through designated doors
- Not leave during the day without being collected by a parent or designated adult and signing out on sign-out book in the office
- Respect all school property



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Wear the school uniform cf Uniform Policy
- Wear school tracksuit only on P.E. days unless otherwise instructed
- Show respect for self and others
- Avoid swearing, fighting, name calling and inappropriate language
- Do their best always and behave well in class so that all children can learn
- Listen to instructions given and do as requested.
- Participate in school activities
- Walk quietly around the school and avoid causing a disturbance.
- Keep the school tidy and litter-free
- Be hygienic and always use a toilet bag in school
- Always obey the Traffic Wardens
- Remain quiet in class line
- Remain seated at all appropriate times
- Bring a nutritional lunch to school c.f. Lunch Policy.

### **Your teacher expects that pupils will:**

- Show him/her and any classroom visitors courtesy and respect
- Accept his/her authority and responsibility and his/her right to teach and impose sanctions on those who behave badly
- Come to school on time and have all the necessary materials. Do their homework carefully and completely to the best of their ability
- Listen when others are talking.
- Avoid distracting behaviour.
- Participate in all class activities to the best of your ability
- Follow the rules drawn up by their class.
- Help keep the classroom tidy and litter-free.

### **Your fellow pupils expect that pupils will:**

- Not bully them c.f. Anti-Bullying Policy
- Show acceptance and respect their differing personalities
- Never insult or belittle them because of differences.
- Respect their property
- Listen to them and acknowledge them
- Share equipment and resources with them
- Make every effort to include them
- Speak to them with courtesy and respect



## **Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy**

- Not preclude them from attending in class.

### **Expectations of school:**

#### **Children expect that school will be:**

- A safe, happy and inclusive environment
- Suited to their learning style
- Encouraging and supportive
- Affirming of children of all abilities
- Capable of dealing with bullying and bullies, and supportive of victims
- A place where they feel valued and respected.

#### **Parents expect that in school there will be:**

- A safe and happy and inclusive environment for their child.
- Recognition and provision for the individual differences of pupils
- Support for children when required
- Support and guidance for them if and when requested
- Fairness and consistency in the way children are dealt with.
- No labelling of their child.
- Contact at an early stage to inform them of any problems
- A willingness to listen to their viewpoint.

#### **Teachers expect that in school there will be:**

- An adherence to the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy of relevant policies
- Mutual respect, support and encouragement within the whole school community
- Co-operation to achieve the schools aims and objectives.
- A fair and consistent implementation of the Code of Behaviour
- A standardised system of dealing with behavioural issues
- An atmosphere that encourages professional development and a willingness to learn and change.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### **Expectations of Parents:**

#### **The school expects that parents will:**

- Be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school and the expectation of pupils.
- Show support for teachers in their implementation of the schools behaviour policy.
- Support their child in his/her school work.
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of their child.
- Ensure he/she has the necessary materials
- Ensure your child has a positive attitude to and abides by the school and class rules.
- Never undermine the authority of the school or teachers.
- Promote respect for teachers and other school personnel.
- Give a current emergency contact number
- Be available to discuss a problem.

#### **The child expects that parents will:**

- Look after his/her basic needs
- Support, praise and encourage his/her work in school.
- Show fairness.

#### **Other parents expect that parents will:**

- Support the school in implementing its code of behaviour.
- Exert firm discipline in cases where their child's behaviour is having a negative impact on the behaviour of others.

**There are certain factors that influence children's behaviour that sometimes need to be considered and accommodated.**

These factors include:

- Approaches to addressing educational disadvantage
- Making adjustments for and valuing diversity; and preventing any form of discrimination (Remember some children have labels that describe some aspect of their pattern of learning/behaviour, for example, SEN (Special Education Needs),



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and EBD( Emotional Behaviour Disturbance). These can alert teachers to particular learning/ behavioural needs.

- Relationship among teachers and pupils
- Pupils' sense of belonging to the school community
- School and classroom environment
- Classroom management
- Break-time management
- Pupil engagement
- Parental involvement

## **2. Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour**

The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

### **Consistent ethos and policies:**

One of the challenges and opportunities for school management and staff is to create a positive school climate through consistent ethos, policies and practices that will support and promote good behaviour. The ethos of Scoil Oilibhéir states that we aim to nurture responsible, capable, resourceful and caring people, who live their lives in a Christian way, respecting and valuing difference. This whole school experience will foster both a love of learning and an awareness of our culture and traditions, thus enabling all who learn and work here to live good and wholesome lives. The policies that currently operate in the school relating to the code of behaviour are: Assessment/Reporting and Record Keeping, The Uniform Policy, the Punctuality Policy, The Attendance Strategies Statement, The Use of Mobile Phone Policy, The Healthy Lunches Policy, Enrolment Policy, Extra-Curricular Activities Policy, The Homework Policy, The Child Protection Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy, The Substance Use Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, The SPHE Curriculum, Supervision Policy and the Safety Statement.

### **A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management:**

The foundation of positive learning behaviour is effective teaching and an inclusive and engaging curriculum. Classroom management and teaching methods have a strong influence on pupil behaviour. The skill of the teacher in managing the routine engagement with pupils is a critical factor in preventing problems. A crucial factor in operating a code of behaviour is



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

the co-operation and support of parents acknowledging responsibility for their child's behaviour in school.

- Staff as a team will have opportunities to confirm that all school policies and practices support the objectives of the code of behaviour. They bring to their work their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning: their experience of what works to help pupils to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community. Opportunities will be provided for staff to deepen their understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and that help pupils to change behaviour. Staff members engage in discussions regarding policy and practice at regular staff meetings to support the code. There may be occasions in which the code is reviewed and updated as a result of observations made at these discussions.
- New and temporary staff is made aware of our code of behaviour through the welcome pack provided to them by the principal and all staff mentoring of newly qualified teachers.
- SEN children with assessed behavioural difficulties are catered for with specific behavioural targets set out on their IEPs (Individual Education Plans). These will be developed collaboratively among pupil, parents and teachers. For example, a child with Asperger's Syndrome may be presented with a visual cue to help him/her follow the school's code of behaviour.
- The school's SPHE curriculum is used to promote the code of behaviour by helping children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills. Specific topics are targeted concurrently throughout the school at various times during the year, for example, anti-bullying week, healthy eating week and stay safe programme as part of the SPHE programme.
- The SPHE plan is available for viewing at the office by appointment
- Circle time, role play and drama are some of the specific activities used in Scoil Oilibhéir to develop good behavioural skills in children.
- C.F Appendix 1 (Menu of Rewards)

### **An inclusive and involved school community:**

#### **The Board of Management:**

- The Board of Management was presented with an interim report January 2010 showing the work in progress to date by the working committee. They were then presented with the completed draft on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The BOM has the ultimate





## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

responsibility of ratifying the code of behaviour and should ensure that the code of behaviour is reviewed every four years or as the need arises.

- The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour by providing opportunities for staff development, for example, training days, lectures etc.
- The Board of Management will follow procedures in dealing with serious breaches of behaviour as outlined in this policy.

### Parents:

- Parents and guardians are responsible for emphasising at home the need for good behaviour at school, and for supporting the school's efforts in creating and maintaining a school climate where effective learning and teaching can take place. To encourage positive behaviour a pupil's behaviour may be monitored and noted so that parents can be involved in this positive reinforcement. The homework journal is an important means of communication between parents and teachers in this regard. Parents will be notified on the school newsletter, Scéala Oilibhéir, that a copy of the draft policy is available to view on the school website. There will be an invitation to parents to make suggestions on the draft policy. However, it is important to note that final authority rests with the Board of Management in accepting or rejecting such amendments.
- Parents are informed that a copy of the Code of Behaviour is available for viewing in the office through Scéala Oilibhéir
- Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour in the following ways:
  - Parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
  - Parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
  - Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
  - Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
  - Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
  - Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school

### Pupils:

Pupils are more likely to support a code of behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Relationships of trust between teachers and pupils can grow stronger through the process.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Under the guidance of the class teacher and a discussion of the standard of behaviour expected in the school, the children, with their teacher together translate the standards into school rules and classroom rules. This ensures that all pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and why.
- The above process will be repeated in each classroom every year.
- Positive behaviour is promoted by the principal and deputy principal during assemblies and through the intercom system and through regular visits to the classrooms by the principal and the deputy principal. Positive behaviour is also promoted through the SPHE and Religion programmes.
- Pupils are responsible for observing expected standards of behaviour and showing respect for themselves, others and the school. The rightful authority of the teacher is to be respected at all times in order to maintain a positive learning environment. This is so that a positive learning environment can be maintained.

### **A systematic process for planning and reviewing behavioural policy:**

The Scoil Oilibhéir development planning process ensures that all of our policies, protocols and procedures work harmoniously to sustain a positive environment for learning and teaching. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any view the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

## **3. Positive Strategy for Managing Behaviour**

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of the code. School management and staff will actively foster a school ethos, policies, and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour. *'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'*.

- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly.
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- Matching work with pupil's abilities. Differentiation will take place by pace, task resource etc. Teachers creating moments of success and then acknowledging them.
- A system of merit marks.
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book.
- A visit to another member of staff or the principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Delegating some responsibility or privilege.
- A mention to a parent-written or verbal.
- Teacher records improvement in the behaviour of a disruptive pupil.
- Implementation of Programmes such as **Circle Time** to promote positive behaviour.
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from pupils.

These strategies synopsis for our children what is expected of them in a language they understand and incorporate our school ethos- *a policy of responsibility and respect*.

The above list is not comprehensive and consists of examples only.

### School Rules

All members of the school community will be expected to display the following behaviours:

- Respect for others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

in accordance with the policy of responsibility and respect.

School rules are devised with regard to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Adults should model expected behaviours in their interaction with children every day. The school rules listed below provide clear guidelines for all members of the school community.

#### SAFETY:

For my own safety and that of others I should:

- Enter and exit through designated doors in an orderly fashion.
- Always obey the traffic wardens
- Not leave during the day without being collected by a parent or a designated adult and sign out in the Sign Out Book in the office.
- Walk quietly around the school and avoid causing a disturbance
- Remain quiet and orderly in the class line
- Remain seated at all appropriate times in my classroom



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Always behave well in the yard and never run or do anything that would put my safety or the safety of others at risk
- Understand that the school rules apply when I am on any school outings
- Abide by the school rules on Substance Abuse, Jewellery , the use of Mobile Phones, Cameras and the Internet.

### CARING FOR MYSELF

I should:

- Attend school regularly and not miss days without good reason. When returning from absence I should present a written explanation.
- Always be in school before the bell rings (at 8.55 a.m)
- Wear the complete school uniform every day
- Wear the school tracksuit on P.E days only , unless otherwise instructed (Correct footwear must be worn for PE )
- Do my best always, and behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn
- Always complete my homework to the best of my ability
- Participate in school activities and have all the necessary books and materials
- Bring a nutritional lunch to school and avoid JUNK food ( crisps, crisp related foods, fizzy drinks ,high energy drinks, sweets, chocolate, chocolate related products and chewing gum are not permitted)
- Nut and food containing nuts are not permitted
- Be hygienic and always use a toilet bag in school

### CARING FOR OTHERS

I should:

- Respect all school property and the property of my fellow pupils
- Show respect, for myself and others by being kind mannerly and polite to all
- Keep the school tidy and litter free, and bring home unfinished food, drinks ,cartons, wrappers etc



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### **Bullying:**

I should never bully others. I should never allow others to bully me and if it happens I should tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.

**Scoil Oilibhéir is a “bully-free zone.**

### **Classroom**

“Ground rules”/ behavioural expectations in each class are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.

- Classroom rules will be drawn up at the start of each academic year by the class teacher and pupils.
- Pupils have an input in devising the class rules.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- Teachers use a number of management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation. For example, positive everyday interactions between teachers and pupils, good school and class routines, recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour and exploring with pupils how people should treat each other.
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour will be communicated to the pupils by their class teacher.

### **Playground:**

Playground rules will be communicated to staff and pupils regularly at staff meetings, assemblies and in the classroom. All pupils have the right to enjoy their time outside in the playground in a safe environment at break periods. Misdemeanour consists of any action that puts safety of self or others at risk.

- In the interest of safety pupils should walk at all times in the playground.
- In the interest of safety pupils should remain on the tarmac area at all times.
- In the interests of safety pupils should refrain from climbing on school railings.
- Any form of fighting or physical violence is considered a major misdemeanour.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- In the interest of safety, when the bell rings during playtime, pupils should stop playing and “freeze” and then move quietly to their class lines when directed.
- Pupils should not enter the school building without getting permission from teachers.
- Adequate supervision is always provided by the teaching staff and a rota is coordinated by a member of the Management team.
- SNAs assist the teacher on duty in the playground in supervising the pupils while prioritising the needs of their designated child or children in their care. All disciplinary issues are dealt with by the teacher on duty.
- In the interest of safety break times are organised so that a limited number of pupils are in the playground at any one time.
- Each class is aware of their designated zone in the playground.
- Pupils who are unable to go to the playground due to illness or other reason will be taken to a designated area near the school office where they will be supervised for the duration of the break.
- In the interest of safety pupils who do not adhere to the above rules will be moved to a “time-out” zone and a record of those pupils and the misdemeanour is maintained in a special Playground Incident Book

### **Wet days / Days pupils cannot access the playground**

- Pupils will remain in their classroom.
- Sharp implements, for example, scissors, knitting needles, sewing needles, compasses and tin-whistles, are to be used only when a teacher is present in the classroom.
- Pupils will have access to activities such as reading, drawing and games.
- Pupils are not allowed to use tin-whistles or recorders on wet days except during supervised music practice.
- Pupils are expected to remain seated in their classrooms.
- Pupils are not allowed to use the internet unsupervised during break times.

### **Swimming days:**

- Pupils are walked to the bus under the supervision of their class teacher.
- Pupils travel to the swimming pool by bus and sit with seat belts fastened.
- Every pupil listens to and obeys the class teacher.
- No shouting or playing in the dressing rooms.
- Every pupil listens to and obeys the instructor.
- No running around pool area.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Swimming caps required.
- Pupils do not leave the pool without permission from the teacher or instructor.
- No jumping into the pool from the side-unless under instructor's directions.
- No pushing or rough play in the pool
- Pupils are expected to dress quickly after each session.
- Shower gels/hairsprays/gels/spray deodorants/shampoo or conditioner are not allowed.
- No drinks/sweets are bought from the vending machine.
- At all times pupils are expected to abide by the rules of the swimming pool.
- Pupils who are not going swimming will be assigned to another classroom for the duration of the swimming session.

### **Tour Rules:**

- Pupils enter/leave the bus in an orderly manner.
- On the bus pupils must sit in their seats, with seatbelts fastened and avoid loudness that would distract the driver.
- Pupils follow any instructions of the teacher at all times.
- Parental/Guardian permission slips allowing the child to go on tour are returned to the teacher prior to the tour.

The standards and rules contained in the code apply to any situation where the pupil, although off the school premises, is still the responsibility of the school e.g. tours, trips, quizzes and matches. The code also applies to extra-curricular activities outside school hours where the pupil is still the responsibility of the school e.g. homework club, training, matches etc.

## **4. Rewards and Sanctions**

### **Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour**

Good behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged in the following ways:

- Praise for the pupil within the classroom
- Pupil sent to other teachers involved with child e.g. nearby teacher, duty teacher, former teacher, L.S./Resource etc
- Pupil sent to Deputy Principal/Principal

Pupil achievement is acknowledged in Special Assemblies e.g.:



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Assemblies after matches, Lán Tinreamh ceremonies, Fógraí an lae inniu , Scéala Oilibhéir, visiting classrooms with trophies and the school website

Rewards are awarded at the discretion of the individual teacher in the different class levels.

“Good news’ is communicated to parents, other classes, principal in the following ways:

- notes home in homework journal
- meeting parents of junior infants at gate
- children sent to Principal/Deputy Principal, teacher next door, L.S./Resource teacher
- home communication copy for SEN children

Refer to Appendix 1 for menu of rewards.

### **Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour**

Despite best efforts, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the code of behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the pupil’s own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of pupils and teachers.

Where a pupil’s behaviour disrupts the teaching and learning of other students, school authorities have to weigh the needs of that student with the needs of other students and staff. Scoil Oilibhéir has a systematic way of attending to both the impact of inappropriate behaviour on other pupils and staff and the impact of a sanction on a pupil. Staff apply professional skill and judgement, in each individual case, drawing on factual and objective information about the impact of a student’s behaviour, and using transparent criteria for measuring that impact.

Scoil Oilibhéir promotes a problem solving approach when dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

- Gather information. Understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour.
- Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening.
- Decide and agree on specific strategies
- Implement the agreed strategy consistently





## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Review progress: evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention.
- Throughout, keep the relationship with the pupil as positive as possible; involve the pupil and parent.

### **Whole-school strategies:**

In so far as is possible, staff members have:

- Agreed ways of describing behaviour
- Arrangements for recording behaviour
- A ladder of intervention: support for all, additional support for some pupils, specialised support for a small minority e.g. Care Team

### **Roles and responsibilities**

While the class teacher is the front-line source of help for pupils, all staff members accept mutual responsibility for behaviour in Scoil Oilibhéir. The class teacher will deal with routine misbehaviour through classroom management strategies, thus minimising the need for other interventions.

### **The Use of Sanctions**

Sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour. A sanction is a form of positive intervention. They should be appropriate to the age and development stage of the student and take account of learning difficulties and cultural background of the pupil.

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

- helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping pupils (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour
- reinforcing the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

In other instances, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the pupil, or other pupils or adults, safe.

Sanctions are used in a way that ensures that:

- sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour
- sanctions are used consistently
- students and parents know what sanctions are used in the school
- sanctions are proportionate
- sanctions are appropriate.

Teachers should ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the pupil is maintained.

The degree of misdemeanour i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and or Principal/Deputy Principal based on a *common sense approach* with regard to the nature, frequency and intensity of such misdemeanours.

C.f. Appendix 2 Sanctions, Appendix 6 Ideas and Resources

### **Involving parents in management of problem behaviour:**

Scoil Oilibhéir has a welcoming atmosphere for parents. The school encourages teachers to contact parents, as educational partners, so that they are made aware of any behaviour difficulties that may exist in school. Parental cooperation and support is a vital element in solving behavioural difficulties. Parents are contacted and involved early when significant behaviour problems begin to appear. Teachers may liaise with the Deputy Principal and consider the nature, intensity and persistence of the misbehaviour when inviting parents to the school. When a serious misdemeanour has taken place, the class teacher may seek an immediate meeting with a parent.

Initial contact between a class teacher and parent can be made through a note in the pupil's homework diary or through a letter posted home. Teachers of infant classes may decide to arrange a meeting when they meet parents at the gate. Appointments, for a mutually suitable time, can also be arranged by the school secretary by telephone call.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

Generally meetings between parents and teachers are held face to face and not by telephone call. Every effort will be made to provide an appropriate meeting environment such as a vacant classroom or the deputy principal's office.

When meeting parents to discuss pupil's behaviour it is important that the teacher puts the parent at their ease. This can be done by greeting the parent by name and thanking them for attending. Polite and respectful language should be used by the both parties throughout the meeting. It should be conveyed to the parent that their cooperation is important in finding a solution to the behaviour difficulty as partners in the educational process. Such a solution will enable their pupil to increase their learning and gain success out of their school experience. Parents may be asked to consider seeking help from outside agencies or the school may arrange help from these agencies with parental consent.

Generally, pupils are not present at meetings but may be asked to attend all or part of the meeting so that he/she can be informed of the strategies agreed between the school and parents in relation to problem behaviour.

In accordance with school policy, parents who have concerns are invited to contact the school and make an appointment to meet with staff members, during school hours. Parents are made aware of this at the welcome meeting for new Junior Infants and in the welcome booklet they receive. The Homework Journal also contains a section that allows parents to communicate concerns to the class teacher. Parent-Teacher meetings also give parents an opportunity to voice any anxieties they may have. Parents who wish to have a consultation with the class teacher are encouraged to make a prior appointment through the school secretary with the relevant teacher. Initial consultations in relation to behaviour should be between the parent and the class teacher.

### **Managing aggressive or violent behaviour:**

- The SEN coordinator in the school is informed.
- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. HSE, NEPS, etc.
- The child is put on the Care Team list if it is deemed necessary
- The child is referred to the SCP School counsellor



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- The relevant S.E.N. personnel are involved in Care Team meetings dealing with the case. They facilitate teachers in sharing practice, and support in the management of challenging behaviour.
- The Deputy Principal or another designated teacher acts as mentor for particular children. He/she assists the teacher in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children.
- Individual behaviour plans are used as an additional support for a small minority. Teachers, SEN personnel, parents, and the pupil may be consulted in the drawing up of these plans. Each case is treated individually. Such plans are retained in the pupil's file in the office. The effectiveness of the intervention is evaluated to determine future action.
- There is a mentoring system in place for newly qualified teachers to support them in this area.
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated in any way possible to partake in professional development in this area, e.g .SESS, Colleges of Education, ICEP courses, Education Centres.
- 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, that pupil will be removed from the room/area or the room/area will be vacated by the other pupils and staff members. The pupil's parents/guardian will be contacted and arrangements made for the pupil to be collected from the school as quickly as possible

### **5.Suspension / Expulsion**

C.F. Chapter 11 & 12 Guidelines

Access to education shapes the life chances of children and young people in a fundamental way. For this reason, a proposal to exclude a pupil, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted only by very serious misbehaviour.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### Legal Context

The entitlement to education is protected in a range of constitutional and legal provisions and in human rights Conventions. These legal protections for the individual pupil's right to education mean that decisions to suspend or expel a pupil are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court. Scoil Oilibhéir includes their procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour as required under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

### Suspension

#### Definition:

Suspension is defined as requiring the pupil to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days. During this period of suspension the pupil retains their place in the school.

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:

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

Please note that all investigations of alleged misbehaviour will be carried out in confidence, bearing in mind fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice.

**NB:** Fair procedures have two essential parts: the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí, who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### **Procedure for Suspension:**

The pupil and parents will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension

Parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond and be heard

Parents will be invited to meet with the class teacher, Principal and/or Chairperson BOM to discuss the gross incident of misdemeanour or serious misdemeanour before any decision is made or any sanction is imposed

In the case of immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

The Board of Management has delegated authority to the Principal to suspend for up to three days, which can be extended to five days with the Chairperson's approval. The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. C.f. Guidelines p.70

Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing.

A written statement of the terms, date of commencement and termination of a suspension will be given to parents.

Parents will be advised of their right to appeal any decision to suspend under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with NEWB Reporting Guidelines [Education Welfare Act, 2000, section 21 (4)(a)]

Formal written records, in line with the school's record keeping policy and data protection legislation, will be kept of the investigation and the decision-making process.

The principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Board of Management will regularly review the use of suspension in the school.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### Re-integrating the pupil

When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to class by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and Principal.

Readmission to school may sometimes involve conditions, for example, earlier finishing times or individual management plans.

Should a pupil report for school even though he/she has been suspended the parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child. The pupil will not be admitted to class but will remain in another room where supervision will be arranged. The pupil will be given school work to do while they wait to be collected.

### Expulsion

A pupil is expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The decision to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:

- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of a serious misdemeanour may be grounds for expulsion. C.f. Appendix 2 for a list of serious misdemeanours.

Where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

Please note that all investigations of alleged misbehaviour will be carried out in confidence, bearing in mind fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

**NB:** Fair procedures have two essential parts: the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí, who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.

### **Procedure for Expulsion:**

- Where preliminary assessment of the facts confirm serious misbehaviour, that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:
- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
- Confirmation of the decision to expel
- Prior to the expulsion of a pupil the Education Welfare Officer must be notified in writing of the school's intention twenty days in advance.
- The pupil and parents will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond and be heard
- Parents will be invited to meet with class teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Chairperson to discuss the gross incident of misdemeanour or serious misdemeanour before any decision is made or any sanction is imposed
- In the case of immediate expulsion, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.
- Formal written records, in line with the school's record keeping policy and data protection legislation, will be kept of the investigation and the decision-making process.

### **Appeals**

A parent 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 the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil.





## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### **6.Keeping Records**

Records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation. They are written in a factual and impartial manner.

#### **Class level**

Teachers record behaviour on a Behaviour Record Template that is kept in a ring binder folder for the year. It facilitates the recording of positives as well as negatives. At the end of the year these sheets are placed in the pupil's file. C.f. Appendix 5

Serious misbehaviour is reported to the principal or deputy principal as outlined in this Code of Behaviour.

Midyear reports and end of year report includes a reference to behaviour. There is a reasonably consistent understanding of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour among the staff and this is addressed on a regular basis at staff meetings.

Parents are kept up to date during the year regarding behaviour issues.

#### **Playground**

Supervising staff keep a record of misbehaviour in the "Red Book". One teacher on duty is assigned to record names and behaviour of pupils in the book. The deputy principal visits classes regularly to update teachers on the information in the Red Book and this is then entered into the class record sheet.

#### **School records**

Incidents reported to the principal or deputy principal are recorded in the Behavioural Incident Book. These records are kept in the deputy principal's office.

Factual reports of particular incidents and communication between school and home, with outside agencies and Board of Management are recorded on the Behaviour Record in the Deputy Principal's office.

Documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29 will also be kept in the Deputy Principal's office



## **7.Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school**

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, 'the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school'. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a pupil's absence and the reason for this absence.

Scoil Oilibhéir has an Attendance Policy in which the strategies used to promote attendance are outlined.

- **Environment:** At Scoil Oilibhéir, we create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents.
- **Early Intervention:** All parents are regularly informed of the statement of procedures in relation to attendance and the importance of attendance.
- **Uniform:** If a child arrives to school without an item of their uniform, they can replace missing items at the school office.
- **Lunches:** If a child arrives to school without a lunch/breakfast, their parents are contacted.
- **Rewards:** Pupils with full attendance are presented with an Attendance Certificate each year at a school assembly. We operate a staged approach in addressing difficulties with punctuality. By way of positive inducement, each class teacher will suitably reward those who never appear on the latecomers list at various intervals throughout the school year.
- **Reports:** We report on attendance to parents in school reports.
- **Supports:** The School Completion Programme and Resource Teacher for Travellers are actively involved in supporting this policy.
- **Staff development issues:** Staff is totally in favour of this policy and is involved in its implementation.

Parents receive advice regarding notification of absence at the beginning of each school year.

The school provides forms in the Homework Journal (Rang 2 – Rang 6) or Homework Copy (Junior Infants – Rang 1) for the parent /guardian to complete regarding absences. It informs the class teacher of the child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. These



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

notes are signed and dated. They are kept by the class teacher until the last day of the school year. C.f. Appendix 6

If parents know in advance that their child is going to be absent e.g. dental or medical appointment, they are encouraged to inform the class teacher beforehand.

The Deputy Principal is informed if a parent fails to notify the school about a pupil's absence, who in turn will inform EWO.

Absence reports are submitted electronically to NEWB, using the school return website [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie)

### **7.Reference to other policies**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Assessment/Reporting and Record Keeping
- Attendance Strategies Statement,
- Child Protection Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Extra-Curricular Activities Policy
- Healthy Lunches Policy
- Homework Policy
- Punctuality Policy
- Safety Statement
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- SPHE Curriculum
- Substance Use Policy
- Supervision Policy
- The Uniform Policy
- Use of Mobile Phone Policy

#### **Success Criteria: (by which the policy will be judged)**

- 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.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

- Comments or compliments on behaviour.
- Children working to the best of their ability
- Class working to the best of their ability
- Improvements in behaviour

### **Monitoring and Review:**

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The Board of Management will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed every four years or more often if the need arises.

**Review date:** March 2014



## Appendix 1

# Menu of Rewards

- ❖ Verbal praise from teacher
- ❖ Note in journal/homework copy
- ❖ Positive comment to parent, other teachers, Principal, Deputy Principal
- ❖ Credit system: star charts, marble rewards, homework passes (non-infant classes)
- ❖ Individual Record of achievement
- ❖ Pupil of the week-improved/good behaviour/effort/kindness
- ❖ Stickers/certificates
- ❖ Care of class pet
- ❖ Edible prizes/trophies/medals/prize boxes/lucky dip
- ❖ Specially written letter home
- ❖ Privilege in class e.g. line leader, helping teacher, going to office
- ❖ Golden time
- ❖ Special activity e.g. time on computer, game
- ❖ Work displayed/exhibited
- ❖ Homework pass
- ❖ Extra P.E./games/outdoor activity/subject-related games
- ❖ Class treat/party
- ❖ Class outing
- ❖ Videos/DVDs
- ❖ Reduced homework
- ❖ Class prize



## Appendix 2

# Procedures to communicate good news

To parents:

- ❖ Note in journal/copies
- ❖ Casual meeting with parents
- ❖ Certificate going home
- ❖ Home communication copy for SEN children

Within school

- ❖ Send child to nearby classes
- ❖ Send child to L.S.T./R.T./R.T.T./former teacher/Deputy Principal/Principal



## **Appendix 3** **Sanctions**

### **Examples of Minor Misdemeanours include:**

- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school
- Running in the school building
- Leaving seat without permission at lunch time
- Not being calm/orderly in class line
- Swinging on chairs
- Not bringing/using toilet bag
- Placing unfinished food/drink cartons in class bin
- Leaving litter around the school
- Not wearing correct uniform or tracksuit
- Wearing make-up to school
- Bringing a mobile phone to school without prior arrangement
- Being discourteous/unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason
- Not having homework signed by a parent
- Endangering self/fellow pupils in school yard at break time
- Not travelling safely and directly between classrooms
- Not obeying school exiting policy
- Disobeying school swimming policy
- Not wearing seat belt on bus
- Repeatedly forgetting books

### **Examples of Steps to be Taken When Dealing with Minor Misdemeanours**

1. Reasoning with the pupil
2. Verbal reprimand
3. Noting instance of yard misbehaviour in yard book

### **Examples of Steps to be Taken When Dealing with Regular Occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours**

#### ***Phase 1 (Within the classroom)***

1. Informing pupil that he/she is being placed in class behaviour record book



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

2. Withdrawal of privileges
3. In class time-out
4. Write story of what happened **or** one copy of school rules **or** relevant rule to upper limit of 10 times **or** Behaviour Reflection form: all to be signed by parent
5. Note in homework journal (written by pupil or teacher) to be signed by parent
  - I. Warning to pupils whose name appears in the yard book more than three times
  - II. Note to parents concerning further misbehaviour in yard.

[Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/others at risk]

### *Phase 2*

1. Send to Deputy Principal
2. Send to Principal
3. Class teacher meets one/both parents
4. Principal/Deputy Principal meets one/both parents concerning yard incident

### **Examples of Serious Misdemeanours**

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Constantly not working to full potential
- Forging parent's signature
- Stealing
- Damaging other pupils' property
- Damaging school property
- Bullying
- Disrespectful behaviour to a teacher
- Back answering a teacher
- Using a mobile phone at school without prior arrangement
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission
- Deliberately using unacceptable language
- Sexual harassment
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil

### **Examples of Steps to be Taken When Dealing with Serious Misdemeanours**

1. Send to Deputy Principal
2. Send to Principal
3. Principal/Deputy Principal sends note home to be signed by parent





## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

4. Principal/Deputy Principal meets one/both parents
5. Chairperson of Board of management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal

### **Examples of Gross Misdemeanours**

- Smoking
- Alcohol/ substance abuse
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a pupil/teacher
- Physical assault on pupil/teacher
- Bringing weapons to school
- Bringing illegal substances to school
- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose on
- Tampering with fire equipment
- Repeated sexual harassment
- Sexual assault

### **Examples of Steps to be Taken When Dealing with Gross Misdemeanours**

1. Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools: NEWB (2008)*
2. Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools: NEWB (2008)*

Please note:

- *Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí, who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.*

**IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THESE LISTS CONSIST OF EXAMPLES ONLY: IT IS NOT MEANT TO BE A TOTALLY COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF MISDEMEANOURS AND PROCEDURAL STEPS**



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### Appendix 4

Dear Parents,

#### **Re. Notification of Child's absence from school**

The Education Welfare Act 2000 section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

To standardise the process of informing the school of your child's absence the school is providing a form for you to complete regarding absences. This form will indicate the dates of absence and the reason for the absence.

These forms will be incorporated into the homework journal/homework copy, for use when your child is returning after a period of absence.

The form will be signed and dated and returned to the class teacher. The class teacher will keep these forms until the end of each school year.

If you know in advance that your child is going to be absent e.g. for dental or medical appointment we would encourage you to inform the class teacher beforehand.

The school will notify the Education Welfare Officer when a parent fails to notify the school about a pupil's absence.

Under the terms of the Educational Welfare Act schools are obliged to inform the EWO when a child has been absent for more than 20 days whatever the reason.

When a child is absent for 15 days this fact is reported to the Deputy Principal and the class teacher sends a letter to the parents reminding them that their child's absence will be reported to the EWO if it reaches 20 Days.

When a child is absent for more than 20 days the parents are informed in writing that this fact has been communicated by the Deputy Principal to the EWO for his consideration.



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### Appendix 5



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### Appendix 6



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

### Appendix 7



Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy

# **Ideas and Resources**



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy



## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy





## Scoil Oilibhéir - Organisational Policy