



**Ardnagrath National School**  
**Walderstown, Athlone**  
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**Code of Behaviour and Sanctions Policy** (January 2019)

**Introductory Statement:**

The Code of Behaviour has been reviewed and amended by the staff of Ardnagrath National School, in consultation with parents and members of the Board of Management. Review commenced prior to summer and was finalised in November 2018. The update was completed in January 2019. This document replaces all previous policies. While Croí agus Caoi has an individual **Challenging Behaviour Policy and Procedures** this policy applies to the whole school community.

**Rationale:**

The Board of Management of Ardnagrath National School decided to review the Code of Behaviour to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

- 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 concerned
- 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 Ethos:

Ardnagrath National School seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

## Aims :

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. ***This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning.*** Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others
- To enhance the learning environment and to allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules are implemented by all staff in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption

## **Guidelines for Behaviour in the School:**

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 and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The overriding principle governing this code is **respect** – respect for ourselves and others and respect for our own and others' property and the environment. The Substance Use policy covers in detail the implications of and procedures for dealing with substance use within the school or during activities away from the school premises. We aim to protect our pupils from the harmful effects of substance misuse and try to prevent them from using tobacco, alcohol, solvents and illegal drugs. We aspire to develop in our pupils' better self-esteem, through providing a positive school climate and atmosphere and through giving our pupils age appropriate information from educational programmes.

## **Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour**

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour.

Teachers will use various strategies to promote good behaviour including merit/ charts, stickers, homework passes, extra responsibilities in class and in the school, singling out for exceptional worthwhile achievements and efforts, and other incidental means of praise or reward.

To facilitate new members of staff becoming familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be available to both parent and teachers on the school website.

Reference to the code will be included in the Information Booklet for Parents which is given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

**Board of Management:** The Board of Management is expected to:

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code
- Ratify the code
- Ensure the code is communicated to the whole school community.

**The Principal:** The Principal is expected to:

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for a review of the code as required

**Teachers and all staff:** Teachers can expect to:

- be treated with respect
- teach in a well maintained physical environment relatively free from disruption
- get support and co-operation from colleagues and parents in order to achieve the school's aims and objectives
- be listened to and participate in decision making which affects their work and that of the school in general
- work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development
- get support and professional advice from the Board of Management, Department of Education and Skills, the National Education Welfare Board, the National Council for Special Education and the National Educational Psychological Services to help to cater for the psychological, emotional and physical needs of their pupils;
- have grievances dealt with according to agreed procedures as set out in the CPSMA (Catholic Primary School Manager's Association) handbook.

**Teachers and all staff** are expected to:

- support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour
- be aware of their duty of care
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their pupils
- praise desirable behaviour
- facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential
- be courteous, consistent and fair
- keep record of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- provide support for colleagues.

**Pupils: Pupils can expect to:**

- Be treated fairly, consistently and with respect
- Feel safe, respected and secure
- Have positive behaviour reaffirmed
- Have misbehaviour dealt with appropriately.

***Pupils* are expected to:**

- attend school regularly and punctually
- wear the school uniform
- work quietly and safely to the best of their ability at all times
- respect the right of other pupils to learn
- show respect for all members of the school community
- respect school property, the property of others and their own belongings
- keep the school environment clean and tidy
- have the correct books and materials in school
- follow class rules
- move quietly and carefully around the school
- line up in an orderly manner before and after break and for bus / car at home time
- stay on the premises and within designated areas during school times and playtime
- do their homework to the best of their ability.

**Parents: Parents can expect to:**

- be treated with respect
- have a safe and welcoming environment for their child
- obtain recognition for individual differences among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available
- have fair and consistent procedures applied to the school's dealings with pupils
- receive progress reports in accordance with agreed school policy (Parent / Teacher meetings and end of year reports)
- receive information on school's policies and procedures.

***Parents* are expected to:**

- ensure their children attend school regularly and on time and that they are collected from school on time
- encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour
- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, and a sufficient healthy lunch and ensure their children wear the school uniform
- encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour
- ***make an appointment beforehand if they need to see a teacher / principal***
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- treat all members of the school community with respect

- provide a letter / note for all absenteeism
- inform class teacher of any change to collection procedure for their children
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others
- communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour
- attend meetings at the school if requested
- help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed.
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
- Label pupils hoodies and other personal property
- Strictly supervise pre-school / visiting children, when in the school.
- read written communication received from the school and respond appropriately

As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

**School Rules:** In order to achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the rules of the school.

Teachers may introduce other rules for their own classrooms but the general school rules are based on the ***Golden Rules of the Circle Time Programme.***

## Golden Rules

### Do

### Don't

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do be gentle</li> <li>• Do be kind and helpful</li> <li>• Do be honest</li> <li>• Do work hard</li> <li>• Do look after property</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't hurt anyone</li> <li>• Don't hurt people's feelings</li> <li>• Don't cover up the truth</li> <li>• Don't waste time</li> <li>• Don't waste or damage things</li> <li>• Don't take things that don't belong to you</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do listen to people</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't interrupt</li> </ul>   |

### **Respect and Courtesy**

- All pupils are expected to treat staff and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy.
- Pupils are expected to use the Christian name of their peers.
- Inappropriate behaviour i.e. rough play, bad language, fighting, personal remarks, name calling, pushing, kicking, and spitting will not be tolerated.
- Aggressive behaviour or foul language will not be tolerated in the school.
- School property and the property of others should be respected.
- The school environment should be kept litter free.
- Chewing gum is not allowed.

### **Dress Code**

Pupils are required to wear the complete uniform every day.

### **Healthy Lunches**

See Healthy Eating Policy which is available from the school office and on the school website (Healthy eating policy forms part of the whole school well-being policy)

### **Substance use**

See Substance Use Policy which is available from the school office and on the school website

### **Homework**

See Homework Policy which is available from the school office and on the school website.

### **Attendance**

Each child is expected to be in school at 9.20 a.m. when the bell rings. Children must be collected promptly at home time.

Pupils are expected to be present every day.

A written note is required to explain all absences.

Pupils leaving school early must be collected and accompanied by an adult.

### **Movement throughout the school/ school grounds**

- Entering and leaving the school must be done in an orderly manner.
- Running is prohibited in classrooms and on the corridors.

### **Break-times**

- Classroom/corridor/yard supervisors are to be obeyed at all times.
- No re-entering the school building during the breaks without permission of teacher or S.N.A
  - During inclement weather pupils remain indoors in their classrooms and may use their activity books, play board games or may watch a programme as selected by the teacher. Teachers on yard duty / S.N.A are responsible for shared supervising of the classes.
  - Pupils are not allowed to retrieve footballs from the field / road
  - Children who stay in at lunch (only if a note or verbal request has been received from a parent) remain in either of the rooms across from the staff room

### **Mobile Phones**

Pupils are not allowed have phones in school. However if a need arises the pupil may bring a phone provided that parents write a note requesting that the child brings a phone. The phone must be turned off and handed to the teacher on arrival and collected at the end of the school day. Pupils have access to the school phone once permission has been given by the teacher.

### **The following are not permitted on the school premises:**

- Dangerous articles, i.e. knives, sharp objects, aerosols, matches, lighters or any object that is considered a danger to any pupil or others.
- Tipp-ex (roller tipp-ex is allowed)

- The introduction of abusive substances, stink bombs, bangers and other dangerous items will not be tolerated.

### **Procedures for notifying the school about absences:**

Parents/ Guardians are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child in Ardnagrath National School by

1. Notifying the school (e.g. phone call / note/ to Secretary/ Principal / class teacher) of the cause of the absence as soon as possible but not later than the end of the third day of absence.
2. Sending in a **signed dated explanation** of absence when the pupil returns to school. Such notes are an important part of the record keeping done to fulfil the requirements of reporting to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). In the case of absences for a day, days or parts of days, a dated note from the parent explaining absence is required. This is in line with the Education Welfare Act. These notes are retained in the school file. The Principal is obliged to report absences of 20 or more days to the National Educational Welfare Board.
3. A written note from parents is required in the case of planned absences from school.

### **Before/After School**

School officially starts at 9.20.a.m. but to accommodate parents pupils are accepted from 9a.m. Parents are reminded that school staff are not responsible for supervising pupils arriving before 9a.m or after the official closing time of 2p.m. (Infants) and 3p.m. for all other classes. Pupils arriving from 9 a.m. onwards must go straight to their classroom where they will be supervised by the class teacher until school officially opens. In instances where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management the organising teacher/s are responsible for the supervision **only** of the pupils participating in the activity. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

### **System for acknowledging good behaviour, progress and effort**

Good behaviour is praised in a number of ways.

a. **For Individuals**, good behaviour may be acknowledged as follows:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A word of praise in front of group/class
- A mention to the principal;
- A comment/smiley/merit in the exercise book
- A mention to parents (verbal or written)
- A treat e.g. if terms of a behaviour contract are fulfilled
- Certificate of Achievement (Star of the Week, Writer of the Week, Reader of the Week) etc

b. **Group/Class:** 1. A Group/Class treat such as:

- Reduction in homework
- DVD
- Time given to preferred activity
- Merit for all children in group/class
- A mention to the principal
- A mention to parents

## **Consequences of unacceptable behaviour**

Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows:

1. Reprimand and Reasoning (making clear what behaviour was unacceptable)
2. Loss of privilege / special activities
3. Referral to Principal
4. Communication with parent
5. Withdrawal from class temporarily to 'time out' area of classroom
6. Withdrawal from class temporarily to another classroom
7. Losses and damage caused must be made good in all cases
8. Suspension/expulsion

### **When and where will behaviour be subjected to the Code of Behaviour?**

Standards and rules in the Code of Behaviour will apply to all situations where the pupils are the responsibility of the school. This includes activities not within the school grounds.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: **Minor, Serious and Gross**. All everyday instances of a **minor nature** are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of **repeated serious misbehaviour** or **single instances of gross misbehaviour**, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

#### **Examples of serious misbehaviour:**

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

#### **Examples of gross misbehaviour:**

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff on the school premises or playground or at any school related activity or pupil
- Actual violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff on the school premises or playground or at any school related activity or pupil

- The taking of unauthorised photos or recordings of other pupils or staff members will be deemed to fall under the term of gross misbehaviour
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to school property or property visited while on a school trip
- Possession, use and / or abuse of dangerous instruments
- Sexual violence

## **Sanctions**

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it can create resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child, who does not do his / her work in class or has not completed his /her homework will receive a minor sanction.

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of seriousness with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Initials on whiteboard
3. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
4. Accompanying the teacher on yard duty during break
5. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
6. Prescribed additional work signed by parents
7. Loss of privileges
8. Detention during break
9. Communication with parents
10. Referral to Principal
11. Sent to Principal
12. Principal communicating with parents
13. For incidents of serious misconduct, cheek or disrespect a parent is immediately contacted and requested to come and collect their child.
14. Suspension (or expulsion ) with consultation according to Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

### **Suspension:**

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

Where there are repeated instances of **serious misbehaviour**, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson, teacher and the Principal. If the parents (and the pupil) do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of **gross misbehaviour**, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the health and safety of pupils and teachers, the Board has deferred responsibility to the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s (and pupil) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff and will not have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case e.g. where repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of

fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

### **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills 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 school year. 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)

### **Summary of Behaviour and Procedures for Croí agus Caoi (extract from Challenging Behaviour Policy and Procedures)**

#### **Pupil leaving school grounds without permission**

1. Adult who witnesses escape or is first to be informed maintains a visual of the pupil in question. This adult alerts school staff. Depending on need the required number of staff will assist.
2. The pupil is followed and observed but not chased.
3. If the pupil is on the road a member of staff will drive beyond the pupil ( if safe to do so ) to restrict travel of pupil and to signal danger to other road users.
4. Time will be allowed for the pupil to calm and for engagement with the pupil – low arousal technique.
5. Parents will be contacted.
6. If the pupil refuses to cooperate and is in danger he/she will be safely escorted back to school.
7. If the situation cannot be handled by members of staff and there is a safety risk to the pupil the Gardaí will be contacted.

#### **Dangerous Behaviour**

1. In the event that a pupil is acting in such a manner as to be a danger to him/herself and/or others he/she will be restrained by staff in a safe and secure manner until all other pupils are removed from the situation.
2. If the environment poses a safety risk to the pupil he/she is removed from this setting and is placed in a safe, secure room.
3. The pupil is supervised to ensure safety and is allowed time to self-regulate.
4. Parents are contacted.

## Reference to other Policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour include Anti-bullying, Enrolment, Tours / Outings, Healthy Eating, Homework, Substance Use, Special Educational Needs, SPHE and the Croí agus Caoi Challenging Behaviour Policy and Procedures . In enrolling children in Ardnagrath National School, parents must support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school. Parents will be notified of the availability of this Policy. This Code of Behaviour is posted on the school web site, is referenced in the Information Booklet for parents and is also available in hard copy on request.

## Success Criteria:

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- 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.

***The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.***

Implementation Date November 2018

**Review January 2021**

Updated January 2019

## Ratification and Communication

Signed ..... (Principal)

Approved by the Board of Management on ...../...../20

Signed ..... (Chairperson)