

Scoil Diarmada Code of Behaviour



2020 -2025

Introductory Statement

Scoil Diarmada’s Code of Behaviour is the result of the ongoing consultation and collaboration between the principal, staff, senior pupils, parents, and Board of Management. It was reviewed and reformulated in February 2011 the light of “Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools”, issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). In drawing up the Code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and the circumstances of the school and our pupils.

Rationale

It is good practice to review our Code of Behaviour to ensure we maintain our high standards of behaviour.

- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school.
- 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:
 - A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
 - B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;

- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
 - D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
 - E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.
- To ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

In our Mission Statement we seek to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life-spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical. Scoil Diarmada also seeks to cherish and challenge children in a safe, secure and attractive learning environment. Our Code of Behaviour aims to provide a framework to promote constructive behaviour so that this mission is achieved.

Aims

- 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 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 co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Content of policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings.

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour
 - Staff
 - Parents
 - Pupils
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
 - Classroom
 - Playground

- Around the school
 - School related activities
4. Rewards and sanctions
 - Strategies to affirm and promote positive behaviour
 - Approaches to rewards and praise
 - Sanctions
 5. Suspension / Expulsion
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion
 - Appeals
 6. Keeping records
 7. Reference to other policies

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

Scoil Diarmada National School expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

1. Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults;
2. Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings;
3. Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
4. Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline expectations of pupils, staff and parents, each class guided by their teacher is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do.

Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

Staff 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 own 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 handbook.

Staff are expected to:

- support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour;
- be cognisant of their duty of care;
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their pupils;
- develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil;
- praise desirable behaviour;
- facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential;
- recognise and provide for individual differences as far as is reasonable;
- be courteous, consistent and fair;
- keep opportunities for disruption to a minimum;
- keep records of serious misbehaviour **and reoccurring misbehaviours**

- provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate behavioural issues with parents

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 where school's policies and procedures can be accessed.

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;
- ensure their children wear the school uniform;
- ensure their children have the correct books and materials;
- have their children's belongings labelled;
- read written communication received from the school and respond appropriately;
- report to the office if calling to the school during the day for any reason;
- make an appointment before hand if they need to see a teacher;
- to treat all members of the school community with respect;
- to provide a letter for all absenteeism or **record reason for absenteeism on Aladdin** (see Section 9);
- inform class teacher of any change to collection procedure for their children;
- help their children to learn and practice good behaviour and to have a positive attitude towards themselves, other people and towards the school;
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty or harm 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.
- Co-operate with our set down/parking policies
- Co-operate with implementation of our healthy lunch policies **and supply their child with a nutritious lunch.**

Pupils

Pupils can expect to

- Be treated fairly, consistently and with respect;
- Have their individual differences recognised and acknowledged when and if possible;
- To feel safe, respected and secure;
- Have positive behaviour reaffirmed;
- Have misbehaviour dealt with appropriately.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly and punctually;
- wear a neat school uniform;
- work quietly and safely to the best of their ability at all times;
- respect the right of others 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;
- stay on the premises and within designated areas during school times;
- do their homework to the best of their ability.
- to eat healthy lunches and avoid “Junk” food, crisps, fizzy drinks, sweets/bars/chocolate, biscuits, pastries, pies, doughnuts, flapjacks, croissants, cereal bars, gum chewing and foods with any nut traces including nutella and peanut butter in school;
- **do not use mobile phones during school hours or Do not use or wear smart devices that have voice recording features in school.** (previously avoid using mobile phones during the day) **Any mobile phones brought to school must be turned off and given to the class teacher in the morning for safe keeping. It will be returned at the end of the day. This applies to school trips, inter school matches and tours. Any devices not handed up to the class teacher will be confiscated and a parent must come to the school to collect it.**
- **avoid wearing long jewelry that can get caught in clothes as this can be a danger on the yard and during sports time. Stud earrings are acceptable**
- **Avoid the use of cosmetics, permanent hair coloring and make up...** (Previously avoid wearing jewelry and cosmetics)
- abide by our Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
- Avoid using obscene/vulgar language

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Classroom

- Courtesy and consideration of others is the basis of behaviour in the classroom. Children must respect the right of others to work and learn without undue interruption.
- Pupils will co-operate with teachers and participate fully with all aspects of class work.
- Pupils will respect the property of other children.
- Pupils will respect school property
- Pupils must ensure that they bring to school everything necessary for their day’s work.
- It is the responsibility of each individual to take care of their own property.
- Pupils must ensure that their desks and the areas they occupy are left clean and tidy.
- Toilet areas must be kept clean and tidy.

- Classrooms must be vacated promptly and in an orderly way when the bell rings at 10.40am, 12.10pm and 2.40pm.

Playground

The school yard is divided into different areas for the classes.

Pupils may be sent to the cooling off areas.

Pupils who continuously misbehave in the yard may be removed from the yard on a permanent basis. This removal may be to a designated work area; to a supervised lunchtime group, or home for the lunch time period where practicable.

Yard Rules will be discussed by the class teachers at least once a term.

The Principal will visit each class periodically to discuss yard issues with the pupils.

Behaviours that are not allowed in the playground:

- Rough play (fighting games, pulling jumpers, dragging pupils to the ground)
- Charging recklessly
- Jeering, spoiling, bullying, name calling, taunting, taking hats, etc.
- Leaving the yard area
- Playing soccer on basketball courts
- Any form of anti-social behaviour
- Any form of dangerous activity
- Any form of bullying or racism

Behaviour Around the School

1. Pupils are expected to treat all school property with respect.
2. Pupils are expected to walk between classes and between classroom and playground.
3. Pupils are expected to talk in a low voice when they enter the school building.
4. Pupils should walk on the right at all times in corridors and on stairs.
5. All classes are escorted to the playground at break time.
6. All classes are escorted to the front/back door at home time.
7. All games stop when the bell rings in the yard.
8. Pupils line up in single file.
9. Pupils are escorted to class from the playground.
10. Pupils are expected to walk on the left through passageway beside school garden

Behaviour on School Related Activities

- All school related activities, irrespective of time or place, are seen to be extensions of the school day and all rules that apply behaviour in school, apply equally to behaviour out of school.
- Pupils are expected to behave in a mannerly, respectful and safe way when taking part in any school related activity and to follow the directions of teachers and other adult personnel or parents who are assisting the teachers.
- Pupils who misbehave at a school related activity may be banned from participation in future such activities.
- Pupils are expected to treat all guides, sports trainers, library and theatre personnel, bus drivers, swimming pool staff, referees, opposing teams and mentors, etc. with respect and courtesy and to follow any instructions, corrections or guidance given.
- Pupils are expected to walk row by row and in ones or twos under the guidance of teachers and SNAs.

- Pupils must always walk in an orderly fashion taking account of traffic, crossing points, other pedestrians.
- Pupils must never cross a road until directed to do so by a teacher.
- Pupils must never interfere with property they pass on a walk or visit (doors, bins, cars, signs, etc.)
- Pupils must never run ahead of the group or lag behind the group **when doing a group walk.**

4.Rewards and Sanctions

Strategies to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour

- Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our code. All staff actively supports our school ethos which emphasises care, respect and responsibility.
- Positive relationships between teachers, parents and pupils are promoted and affirmed.
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Good school and class routines are in operation. Core routines necessary for the smooth running of classroom learning are clearly established – e.g. entry to the classroom, settling for whole class teaching, appropriate seat planning, transition time routines, how to fairly get teachers attention, noise level for pair/group work. etc,
- Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children. Each class will agree rules stated in terms of observable behaviours.
- Teachers use a classroom management plan to promote positive behaviour. This includes the class rules as mentioned above, the agreed reward system and the consequences that apply when a child fails to adhere to the rules.
- Parents are welcome in our school and staff consult with them where necessary.
- Teachers ensure that the class timetable is as varied as possible and present a balanced and interesting educational programme for the pupils. Children are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur clear, consistent consequences.
- SPHE is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem and respect and care for others .

Approaches to Rewards and Praise

Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results. Our approach to rewards and praise include the following:

- A quiet word of praise or gesture to show approval;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A visit to another member of staff
- Pupils are sent to the Principal for affirmation
- Informing parent – written/verbal communication. This could include a note in the pupil's homework journal or a note home in the school diary / **Aladdin noticeboard** or text message.
- Points, treats or stickers are awarded to individuals/teams/class for good behaviour and effort put into school and homework;
- Special Class treats – golden-time; raffle; watch a DVD; Homework passes;
- Awarding some special responsibility or privilege e.g. leader for the day, specific classroom job.;
- Certificates may be awarded for good behaviour, effort and academic progress. (e.g. Student of the Week in Junior Infants, Gaeilgoir na Caoise)

Sanctions

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

The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour – they are not always followed in the format listed.

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or on the yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parents **or note via Aladdin**;
- Carrying out a useful task within the school;
- Reflection sheet (keep on file by teacher);
- Extra classwork/homework
- Referral to another teacher/classroom for a period of time;
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians
- Supervision during lunch breaks in designated area;
- Withdrawal of privileges, responsibilities or extra duties;
- Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour on Aladdin and referral to the principal;
- Formal written communication with parents/guardians
- Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other members of the Board of Management;
- Formal meeting with parents/guardians
- Suspension;
- Expulsion

Classification of Misbehaviours

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach giving regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of possible minor misbehaviour;

Interrupting class work / Running in the school building / Littering around the school / Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian) Talking out of turn.

Class teachers will deal with instances of minor misbehaviour as follows:

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or on the yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent **or note via Aladdin**;
- Carrying out a useful task with the school;
- Reflection sheet (kept on file by teacher);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians

Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows;

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom)
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;

- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)
- Referral to the Principal;
- Discussion with parents about misbehaviour.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of possible serious misbehaviour:

Constantly disruptive in class

Stealing

Damaging others' property

Bullying

Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard

Using unacceptable language

Deliberate, continual disobedience

Discourteous or unmannerly behaviour

Leaving school premises without permission.

Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- Child will be sent to the Principal;
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of continuous misbehaviour;
- Class teacher and Principal will meet with one/both parents;

Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

Suspension will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.

Following formal verbal discussions a letter outlining items discussed will be sent to parents. Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, as a sanction, will be in writing.

(Copies of all correspondence will be retained)

Gross Misbehavior

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

Bringing weapons, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or dangerous substances to school

Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate

Deliberately injuring any member of the school community

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting).

Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.

Teachers will take the following step when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension may be sanctioned.

5.Suspension/Expulsion/Appeals

Suspension

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or 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 misbehaviour, 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 authorised the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with 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 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.

When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardians to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardians with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Expulsion

In extreme cases of breakdown in behaviour, the Board of Management may need to have a child expelled from school. The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 requires that a student may not be expelled except according to its published policy. The Act of 2000 (section 24) stipulates that where a Board of Management is of the opinion that a student should be expelled, the board is required to inform the NEWB of its decision, and the reason why in writing. This notice should only be submitted after all internal school processes have been exhausted. A Notice of Decision to Expel Form is available on www.schoolreturn.ie. The decision to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after the NEWB have received notification in writing. On receipt of this notification, a letter of acknowledgement with the date of receipt of NEWB, will issue immediately. The Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

The Principal should:

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

- Insure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation;

It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have an allegation about the student).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations. When a Board approves an expulsion, 20 days written notice must be given to the National Education Welfare Board and the decision is also communicated in writing to the parent(s).

Record Keeping

General Behaviour Record Keeping

1. Each teacher must keep a file with a page for each pupil in the class to record significant behaviour events.
2. All letters sent home regarding behaviour are photocopied to the pupil's file.
3. A register of all serious yard incidents is kept in by the principal.
4. A register of all bullying reports is kept by the principal.
5. A register of all suspensions (pupil name , incident, dates imposed, reasons, etc.) is kept by the principal and will be notified to parents by post.
6. A written record is kept of all formal meetings held between the principal and/or teachers and parents.
7. Copies of all behaviour letters, detention and suspension letters are kept in pupil's file.

7. Reference to other Policies

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Supervision
- Enrolment
- Internet AUP
- Home / School links
- Health & Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs
- Homework
- Mobile Phone/Electronic Devices

Success Criteria

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.
- Feedback by way of survey/questionnaire may be sought from pupils, teachers and parents

Roles and Responsibility

Principal

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

Board of Management

- To manage the school
- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code of behaviour

Please see expectations for staff, pupils and parents also.

Implementation Date

This policy will apply from the beginning of the 2020/21 school year.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended in 2025 or earlier if it is deemed appropriate to do so as a result of consideration of any success criteria.

Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified the policy at its meeting in June 2020

Signed by Chair of the Board of Management .

