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1. **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:**

We recognise that our school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, mutual respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clearly agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

In devising our School Code of Behaviour we have endeavoured to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

How was the Code devised.

The management team held numerous meetings to examine and discuss the content of “Developing a Code of behaviour, Guidelines for Schools”, all staff members having been asked to read the book, a school development Planning Day was held on Tuesday, 5th May 2009. On this day an audit of the existing code took place and the following were discussed –

- . existing code and how to improve on it.
- . strategies to promote good behaviour.
- . school rules – class, playground, outings
- . rewards / sanctions
- . communication with parents.

A draft document based on the work to date was presented to the Board of Management and the Parents Council. Based on further discussions the code was redrafted and recirculated. The final document was presented to the Board and ratified on

School ethos and Mission Statement

In devising our Code of Behaviour we were guided by our school's philosophy and ethos as expressed in our mission statement.

“Imbued with the Presentation Spirit we promote the dignity of all our pupils by educating them in a caring christian environment, nurturing and encouraging a sense of self-worth, respect for themselves and others and an appreciation of a good work ethic, thus fostering their spiritual, emotional and academic development”.

2. AIMS OF THE CODE

Aims of the Code:

- . to enable teachers to teach and pupils to learn without disruption.
- . to ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement.
- . to promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- . to allow the school to function in an orderly way, where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- . to foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- . to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- . to encourage consistence of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- . to ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.

- . to encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of the Code.

3. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

We acknowledge that it is of paramount importance that a holistic approach be adopted in promoting positive behaviour in our school.

The key elements of this approach are:

- . Teamwork – involving staff, pupils, parents and the Board of Management
- . Ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony and support each other
- . A whole school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- . An inclusive and involved school community
- . An on-going systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy

The Role of the School Staff:

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we will aim to:

- . create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- . promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- . provide a caring and effective learning environment
- . encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- . ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- . show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- . to discourage physical aggression and encourage '*kind hands, kind words, kind feet*'

All staff, including temporary and substitute teachers will be provided with a Copy of the Code of Behaviour. Staff will be responsible for the day to day implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

Teachers and the Curriculum

Teachers will use the Social, Personal and Health Education programme to support the Code of Behaviour. Through the SPHE programme teachers will aim to foster self-esteem and help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship. They will also aim to help our pupils develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, as well as conflict resolution skills.

The Role of the Board of Management

The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school and has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is prepared, implemented and reviewed regularly. The Board will offer support and

advice on any interventions deemed necessary. It will support staff in providing opportunities for staff development and has a particular role in the area of suspension and expulsion.

The Role of Parents

Parents play a key role in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The school needs the support and co-operation of parents in order to meet legitimate behavioural expectations. They play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes that produce good behaviour in school.

Parents will aim to support the Code of Behaviour by:

- . co-operating with the school's rules and systems of reward and sanction
- . ensuring punctuality and good attendance
- . providing the school with requisite notes for absences, appointments etc.
- . ensuring that pupils adhere to dress code (see appendix ii)
- . encouraging the children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- . attending meetings at the school if requested
- . helping children with their homework, ensuring that it is completed
- . ensuring that children have the necessary books and materials for school

Parents will be alerted at an early stage where there are concerns about their child's behaviour, so that ways of helping the pupil can be discussed and agreed. Where parents wish to express their concerns regarding matters of behaviour they

will raise the concerns firstly with the class teacher, then with the Principal and if the issues remain unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further he/she may put his/her concerns in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Prior to registering a pupil, the parents shall be provided with a copy of the schools' Code of Behaviour. Parents will be asked, as a condition of registering a child, to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by their child. (Section 23 (4) of Education Welfare Act 2000)

Communication between school and home:

We see communication between parents and the school as central to maintaining a positive approach to behaviour. A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor in encouraging positive behaviour at school.

- . Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, past or present, which may affect behaviour.
- . Where a legal separation applies and where both parties are entitled to information from the school, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to make the school aware of this and to supply the school with all relevant contact information.
- . Parents are encouraged to attend parent/teacher meetings (usually held in the first term)

- . For other school-time meetings, parents are requested to make an Appointment with the teacher/principal. Parents are requested to avoid calling unexpectedly during class time (except in emergency)

All visitors to the school, including parents, should first call to the Secretary's Office to minimise class disruption. Forgotten lunches and gear etc. should be left with the school secretary.

In all their dealings with each other it is expected that parents and staff will treat one another with courtesy and mutual respect.

The following methods of communication will be used:

- . Informal parent/teacher meetings.
- . Formal parent/teacher meeting
- . Through child's homework diary (infants do not have a diary – please check school bag each evening for notifications).
- . Letters / notes from school to home and from home to school.
- . School notice board
- . Newsletters
- . End of year reports.

Attendance:

1. If a child has been absent a written explanation must be given to the class teacher on his/her return to school. While explanations by phone are appreciated a note is essential.

2. Pupils who wish to leave the school for visits to doctor, dentist etc. must have a written note and must always be collected at the classroom or office by a parent/guardian. If someone other than a parents is collecting the child that person's name must be on the note.
3. Parents are requested to respect the integrity of the school year and not withdraw pupils for holidays during school time.
4. Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 school authorities are obliged to notify the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) when a pupil has been absent for 20 days or more and must specify the reasons for the absence.

Parents will receive a letter from the school when 15 days have been missed.

They will be again informed when the 20 day limit has been reached and that the National Education Welfare Board have been notified of this.

The Role of Pupils:

In as far as possible, pupils are consulted about school, yard and class rules.

We believe that they are far more likely to support a Code of Behaviour which they have helped develop. The rules will be regularly reviewed with them – in class

(S.P.H.E.) and at assemblies.

School Rules:

- . Respect for self and others
- . Respect for other's property
- . Respect other students and their learning
- . Kindness and willingness to help others
- . Follow instructions from staff immediately
- . Walk quietly in the school building
- . Courtesy and good manners
- . Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- . Ask permission to leave the classroom.
- . Do your best in class
- . Take responsibility for your own work

See appendix (i) for more specific rules.

These can be summed up as 6 main rules:

- . Respect / Be nice
- . Do your best
- . Be tidy
- . Be safe
- . Walk
- . Listen

Where will school rules apply?

The school rules will apply in the classroom, the corridors, the school yard and grounds, toilets etc. They will also apply on school tours, outings and any

school linked events – quizzes, competitions, games etc. (see Appendix iv for specific rules for these events).

4. **POSITIVE STRATEGIES (to promote good behaviour and regular attendance).**

A positive approach incorporating positive strategies will be used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and avoid misbehaviour.

1. Ground rules/behavioural expectations will be set in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning in the class.

2. Pupils will have an input in devising class rules (SPHE – circle time, discussion, Walk Tall).

. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

. There is a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour.

. A differentiated approach to curriculum to ensure that all pupils are involved and challenged

. Teachers will employ a variety of classroom management techniques that

ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation

. Timetabling will aim to ensure variety and balance

. Yard games will be taught as part of P.E.

5. **REWARDS AND SANCTIONS**

Part of the vision of Scoil Mhuire is to help children achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school.

Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour will be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise and affirmation is given:

- . a quiet word or gesture to show approval
- . a comment in a pupil's exercise book.
- . a visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- . a word of praise in front of a group or class.
- . a system of merit marks or stickers.
- . delegating some special responsibility or privilege.

a mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

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 minor misbehaviour:

Interrupting class work/Running in school building/Unruly behaviour in class line or school yardleaving seat without permission at lunch time/Deliberate littering of school/Not wearing correct uniform/Being discourteous/Being unmannerly/Not completing homework without good reason/Not having homework signed by a parent/guardian.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours:

Verbal reprimand / reasoning with pupil.

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)

Note in homework journal to be signed by parent/guardian / Temporary separation from peers / sending to another teacher / denial of participation in some class activity / warning to pupil whose name appears in yard book more than three times / note to parents concerning further misbehaviour in yard (Misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/other pupil at risk).

Phase 2:

1. Send pupil to Principal
2. Class teacher and Principal meet with parents/guardians

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

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

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- . Assault on a teacher or pupil.
- . Serious theft.
- . Serious damage to property.

Sanctions:

The use of sanctions or consequences will be characterised by certain features:

- . it will be clear why the sanction is being applied
- . the consequence will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- . it will be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- . group punishment will be avoided as it breeds resentment
- . there should be a clear distinction between minor and serious/gross offences
- . it will be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus
- . the sanction will be age appropriate and proportionate to the offence

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. Following consultation with the Principal 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. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
4. Prescribing extra work/writing out the story of what happened.
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during breaks – this will not require prior notice to parents.
7. Communication with parents.
8. Referral to Principal

9. Principal communicates with parents.
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

However sanctions will 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, may be detained at break time to finish the work or a child who has played roughly on the yard may be detained indoors at break time. Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health and safety.

6. SUSPENSION / EXPULSION – Procedures

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents/guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss the child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupils will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

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 with the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents/guardians 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, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviour, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes as well as 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 safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Right of Appeal:

If a child has been suspended for a total of twenty days in a school year parents may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Likewise in the case of expulsion parents/ guardians may appeal to the Secretary General of the department of Education. An appeal against expulsion may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement):

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated. An undertaking must be given that the 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. 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.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians and the class teacher, learning support / resource teacher. The Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice following psychological assessments will be sought.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals. However, while the code will be flexible enough to allow for the implementation of individual management plans, in the case of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, when the safety and duty of care to

others is at issue and the rights of others are infringed, the code takes precedence.

7. **RECORD KEEPING**

Record keeping:

All records will be written in a factual impartial manner. Class teacher will keep records of misbehaviour in the class.

The Principal will maintain a Yard Incident Book where yard misbehaviours are noted.

All interviews with parents/guardians will be dated, minuted and filed in the Principal's office.

All records will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

APPENDICES:

(i) School Rules:

Safety: For my own safety and that of others:

- (a) I should be careful coming to and going from school.
- (b) I should always walk while in the school building.
- (c) I should remain seated in class while eating lunch.
- (d) I should play safely and gently and always show respect for my fellow pupils.
- (e) I should bring a note of explanation following absences.
- (f) During school hours I should never leave the school grounds without permission of the Teacher/Principa

Caring for myself:

- (a) I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- (b) I should always be in school when the bell rings at 9.00a.m.
- (c) I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day. (see Appendix ii)
- (d) I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- (e) I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Chewing gum is not permitted.
- (f) I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by always completing my homework.

- (g) Use of mobile phones is not allowed during school hours. Home - school contact is available through the office.
- (h) Use of electronic games is not allowed.

Caring for others:

- (a) I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining silent and orderly in my class line.
- (b) I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
- (c) I should always try to keep my school clean and litter free.
- (d) I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- (e) I should be truthful and honest at all times.

(ii) **School Dress Code**

Girls: Navy Pinafore/skirt, blue shirt, navy jumper, navy and blue striped tie.
Navy tights or knee socks.
Sensible, safe shoes.

Boys: Navy trousers, navy jumper, blue shirt, navy and blue striped tie.
Sensible, safe shoes.

P.E. School tracksuit, blue polo shirt and sensible runners.

School tracksuits to be worn on P.E. and drama days. On other days it is to be worn only with Teacher's permission (e.g. tours).

Summer shorts and blue polo shirts may be worn in summer term. The Principal will indicate when pupils may start wearing them.

In the interest of safety jewellery should be kept to a minimum – hooped earrings are

not allowed.

Make-up is not allowed.

(iii) Playground Rules

1. All children will play safely (no fighting, punching “mock” fighting etc.)
2. All children will respect the rights of others to a safe and happy playtime.
3. Problems, concerns, accidents etc. will be reported to a teacher on duty.
4. Children can only go to sick bay with a teacher’s permission.
5. Toys and sports equipment are not allowed on the yard at playtime.
(in fine weather skipping ropes are allowed in the senior yard.)
6. When the bell rings, everybody stops and **walks** to the line in an orderly Manner.

(iv) Rules for school outings

- . All school rules apply on school outings.
- . Mobile phones are brought at children’s own risk.
- . No electronic equipment or valuable jewellery to be brought on school outings.
- . Class teacher may recommend a reasonable cap on the permissible amount of pocket money.

Requirement for teachers:

- . First Aid Kit

- . Mobile Phone
- . List of names and contact numbers.
- . List of children with written permission to walk home.

Other Relevant Policies that relate to and support the Code of Behaviour

- . S.P.H.E. Plan
- . Anti-bullying Policy
- . Health and Safety Policy
- . Admissions Policy
- . Homework Policy
- . Special Educational Needs Policy.
- . School Tours Policy
- . Mobile Phone Policy

People to whom the Code of Behaviour is of relevance:

Pupils
Teachers
Parents/Guardians
S.N.A.'s
Board of Management
School Secretary
Caretaker
All visiting teachers and coaches.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal

SCOIL MHUIRE

Presentation Primary School

Kilkenny

Code of Behaviour

Draft Copy

April 2010