

**ST. EUNAN'S NATIONAL SCHOOL,  
LAGHEY, CO. DONEGAL. TEL. 074 9722730.**

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

1. In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.
2. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers.
3. The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.
4. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
5. 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, pupils and parents. Against this background, the issue of RESPECT is emphasised. Within the community of this school, individuals must respect themselves, others, the belongings of others, the school building, grounds and property. Respect is the seed of consistency and fairness.
6. The rules are being kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what pupils should do.
7. All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. This should help to reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.
8. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school hours rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

**9. Example of unacceptable behaviour:**

**A. General:**

- Disobeying the daily procedural rules which are posted in each classroom (see Appendix 1).
- Lack of respect: - answering back, giving cheek or arguing with members of staff.
- Unacceptance of reprimand.
- Unco-operativeness with staff.
- Using bad language.
- Being untruthful.

- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Theft of or damage to school or other people's property.
- Encouraging and/or supporting unacceptable behaviour in others.

#### **B. In Class:**

- Failing to do or complete homework.
- Talking out of turn.
- Distracting other children.
- Skitting/laughing deliberately and needlessly.
- Untidiness, defacing books, bags and copies
- Inattentiveness and fidgeting.
- Passing notes around.
- Disruptive behaviour.
- Moving out of seat without permission.
- Regularly forgetting books, copies etc.

The above list may vary slightly from time to time depending on circumstances and or if the need arises

#### **C. School Property**

- It is very important that our school building be kept in good repair.
- Where significant damage to school property occurs parents will be informed and may be required to compensate the school for damage caused.
- In relation to our Book Rental Scheme, parents will be requested to replace or cover the costs of damaged and / or misplaced books.

#### **D. Bullying**

Definition: "Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time".

Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved; it affects everyone in the classroom, in the school community and, ultimately in the wider community. It is recognised internationally that bullying behaviour is not confined to schools alone; it is prevalent in society, in the workplace and in the home. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. It may be just an exchange between equals. However, the frequency of such acts will alter this view; when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

**10. The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:**

- (a) Reasoning with the pupil.
- (b) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- (c) Temporary separation from peers, friends, or others.
- (d) Loss of responsibility i.e. chores/tasks.
- (e) Prescribing additional work/lines.
- (f) Referral to Principal.
- (g) Communication with parents.
- (h) Pupils who misbehave frequently may not be allowed to participate in school outings or extra curricular activities for their own safety and the safety of others.
- (i) Suspension
- (j) Expulsion

The Principal will have the discretion to modify these steps in relation to the behaviour associated with children with special educational needs who have a special needs assistant or for a child who has been referred to a psychologist for behavioural issues.

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

11. Communication with parents will be verbal or depending on the circumstances by letter. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

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 and Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools.

In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board of Management may sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

## Suspension

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil. A pupil should not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances. The Board of Management normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. Any suspension for which the pupil has been suspended in a school year for 20 days or more is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. A single incident of misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally other interventions will have been tried before suspension. The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as;

- 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

The school will observe the following;

- Inform the pupil and their parents about the complaint
- Give parents and pupil an opportunity to respond
- Initial suspension no longer generally than 3 days. (except in exceptional circumstances)
- BOM will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil for 20 or more days in a school year (in total). Any such suspension is subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998).

The principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend their child and the letter will confirm:

- the period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end,
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed,
- the arrangements for returning to school including any commitment to be entered into by the pupil and the parents,
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. (Education Act 1998, section 29)

The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

The school will then expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils

## **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil.

Before expelling a pupil, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:

1. Meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour.
2. Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist.
3. Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
4. Seeking the assistance of support agencies, if appropriate

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a pupil requires serious grounds, such that:

1. the pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
2. the pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
3. the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Sexual assault

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.(includes contacting parents re behaviour as with suspension)
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal (parents informed of the same)
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing (incl. informing Educational Welfare Officer. The pupil cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date the EWO receives the written notification)

5. Consultations arranged by an Education Welfare Officer(BOM may consider suspending the pupil during this period if the continued presence of the pupil will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff)
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel. ( notifying parents, info on right to appeal-section 29)

### **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

### **Absences**

The parents are requested to inform the school in writing for the reason for the children's absence. Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 the school informs the NEWB in writing of any child who is absent for twenty days or more.

12. Bullying poses real difficulties for school behaviour and discipline. Our policy on Bullying is integrated in a school climate which encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration and support for others.
13. Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also, from support services within the wider Community, e.g. Community Care Services provided by Health Boards.
14. Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school ie during school tours and extra curricular activities. Parents, SNA's, coaches etc are asked to uphold the code when helping out in the school and or with school related activities.
15. In formulating this code, the Principal consulted with parents inviting submissions relating to the possible content of the code. All members of the teaching staff have been involved in planning the code. A copy of this code is made available to all parents.
16. In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relations with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

**Ratification and Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed on an on-going and/or when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff where possible.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

## **Appendix 1**

### **School Rules**

**(A)** We consider the following behaviour in the classroom unacceptable and we try to discourage same:

- Not working in class.
- No / Incomplete homework.
- Talking during work-time.
- Shouting out / across the classroom.
- Leaving seat and walking around during work.
- Taking things that don't belong to you.
- Abusing books / resources.
- Eating in class.
- Annoying or interfering with classmates in any way.
- Striking or hurting classmates.
- Not wearing the specified school uniform.
- Inappropriate language in class.
- Writing on school property.

### **(B) PLAYGROUND**

**Our Playground Rules are as follows:**

- We play safely and stay in our own designated area.
- We stop when the bell rings.
- We line up quietly.
- We talk to the adults on duty if we need to.
- We ask for permission to leave the playground to use the toilet facilities, and we inform an adult when we return.
- We use appropriate language at all times.

We do not annoy or interfere with other children in any way.

**DECLARATION**

**TO BE RETURNED TO *PRINCIPAL***

This is to acknowledge that I / we

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have read the enclosed Code of Behaviour of St. Eunan's National School and will endeavour at all times to support Principal and Staff in applying this code so that a school atmosphere conducive to learning may be maintained to everyone's benefit.

Yours sincerely,

The Staff at St. Eunan's.