Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny

# Code of Behaviour

**Reviewed: November 2018**

**Ammended due to Covid Sept.2020**

**Introductory Statement**

This original Code of Behaviour has been devised by the staff of Convent N.S. in consultation with a PPDS Advisor, the members of the Board of Management, and the parents committee. It was devised during the second term of the 2009/2010 school year. This policy applies to all pupils while in school and engaging in all school related activities including trips and outings.

This plan was reviewed during the 2018-19 school year and reflects discussions on the need to include specific examples of positive reward systems and preventative strategies to be adopted at class and at whole school level as well as setting out clear and specific steps to be taken in the event of persistent or serious misbehaviour. It was amended to take into account the adoption at whole school level of aspects of the Incredible Years Programme and the use of Individual Behaviour Plans (where necessary) as advocated in NEPS document **“Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties- A continuum of support”**. The implementation of this plan is supported by a bank of resources/ tools which are available to teachers on the school server and in hard copy format in the office.

**Rationale**

The Board of Management of Convent N.S. 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:*

*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.*

**Relationship to Characteristic Ethos**

Convent N.S. Presentation Convent N. S. strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

The dignity of each pupil, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in this statement. As a staff we are aware of the importance of our pastoral care role in the welfare of our children, and are committed to safe guarding their well- being. 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 the code, consideration was given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

The aims are:

1. To ensure the safety and well-being of all
2. 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.
3. To ensure every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in the school.
4. To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
5. To comply with legislation e.g. The Education (Welfare Act) 2000.

**PRINCIPLES**

1. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accept and work with these differences.
2. 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.
3. The school recognises that the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students.
4. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner**.**
5. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal Teacher. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline in his /her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility with the staff for good order within the school premises.

**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. Senior students have a role to play and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Parents’ Council or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The parts of the policy referring to suspension and expulsion will apply to all students in mainstream classes (discretion will be used regarding incidents at junior level i.e up to and including 1st Class) during *all* school related activities.

A child “misbehaving” in the junior classes is very often the result of poor social skills and not knowing how to play and interact with others. It is important that the junior class teachers teach the children how to play and that the children get the opportunity to practice this play. Parents need to be made aware of what one child may feel is rough is normal to another child. It is our duty to protect the child who feels threatened by rough play by encouraging them to tell us when things are not right and by listening to them and creating a safer environment for them

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

To facilitate new members of staff become familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be included in all teachers’ documents. Parents of new entrants to the school will be made aware of the code and directed to the school website where it may be read. Copies of the code may be ordered from the school office.

**STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

* Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults
* Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children’s and their own belongings
* Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
* 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 the “school rules”, each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class and they reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules are kept to a minimum, are recorded in simple language and are stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules are displayed in the classroom and are referred to regularly and form part of SPHE lessons.

**School Rules**

**Pupils agree to:**

* be careful coming to and going from school
* walk on stairs, corridors, in toilets and classroom.
* remain seated at appropriate times in class.
* send an e-mail note of explanation following absences
* leave the school grounds only with permission from the principal, parents or the class teacher.
* respect self and property, always keeping school bag, books and copies in good order.
* endeavour to arrive in school before the assembly time and remain in school until closing time below
* always be aware of personal cleanliness.
* bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school as per the Healthy Lunch Policy. Chewing gum, crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks are not permitted under the healthy lunch policy.
* always do his/her best in school by listening carefully, working to potential and by completing homework as per the school’s homework policy.
* be kind and respectful to all staff members and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining silent and orderly in the class line.
* behave well in class so that all can learn.
* always keep the school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, rubbish containers etc. home.
* be truthful and honest at all times.
* show respect for fellow pupils in the schoolyard. The following playground code is agreed:

**Playground code: All pupils agree to:**

* Stay in the playground unless you have permission to leave.
* Include others in your play.
* Line up carefully at the end of playtime.
* Use play equipment properly and safely.
* Return play equipment to storage at the end of break
* Play suitable games – don’t fight, tease or bully.
* Keep the school grounds clean and tidy.

**Restricted Areas**:

1. Secretary’s Office (unless with permission)
2. Caretaker’s Lock Up
3. Staffroom during lunch and break time. Pupils must knock on staff room doors and wait to be admitted
4. The grassy hill at side of school (unless given permission in summer term)
5. Lunch room shed or shed off the bicycle shed unless directed to enter by a teacher

* show respect for the school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day.

The following dress code is agreed:

* The school uniform is worn on all school days other than on days of P.E., drama and swimming. The tracksuit worn must be the **designated school tracksuit**.
* Comfortable and safe footwear is recommended and runners are practical for playtime and P.E. lessons. **Pupils must ensure that laces are properly tied on all shoes**. Black or navy school shoes only.
* Make up (or traces of) is not worn in school.
* The use of hair dye is only permitted if dyed natural colour is used.
* Jewellery is strongly discouraged on health and safety grounds.
* **Not to use or bring mobile phones to school**. Pupils will be facilitated to contact home if necessary by using school phone. (See mobile phone policy )
* Never bully others and never allow others to bully him/her and if it happens tell parents and teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.

Teachers and pupils will work together to discuss these rules and may further develop them through class rules.

*Assembly*: 8.50 a.m

*School begins*: 9.00 a.m.

*School Closes*: Junior and Senior Infants 1.45p.m.

Other Classes 2.45 p.m.

**Note;** As part of our Covid Response Plan pupils are dismissed at staggered times.

Junior Infants 1.40pm Senior Infants 1.50pm

First/Second class 2.40pm Third/Fourth Class 2.40pm Fifth/Sixth Class 2.50pm

See Covid Response Plan for full details.

**Strategies for encouraging positive behaviour:**

**Teachers and other school staff will use a number of strategies to promote positive behaviour at class and school level, for example:**

* positive everyday interactions between teachers and pupils
* the maintenance of an ordered environment
* good school and class routines
* clear boundaries and rules for students e.g *Give me Five*, giving pupils responsibility in the school and involving them in the development of class and school rules
* helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
* exploring with students how people should treat each other
* modelling and specifically teaching positive behaviour
* A quiet word or gesture to show approval
* A comment in a pupil’s exercise book
* A word of praise in front of a group or class.
* A system of merit marks.
* Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
* A visit to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation.
* Using a variety of reward systems e.g. star charts, student of the week, special child, tóg ticéad, Group and individual rewards, golden time, certificates and happy grams, mention to parent or note or phonecall home

**Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows: -**

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

* A non-verbal warning will be given to the child.
* Deliberate ignoring of misbehaviour and praising adjacent pupil (s) who is/ are showing appropriate behaviour (Pupils also systematically taught how to ignore misbehaviour/ distraction using *ignoring muscle)*
* A verbal warning - the classroom rule which is being broken is cited and the consequence of the behaviour is outlined clearly for the child. Advice is given on how to improve behaviour.
* The child is temporarily separated from peers within the classroom, e.g. in order to cool down and reflect on misbehaviour at Time out/ Thinking table or chair.
* Loss of privilege eg. class jobs
* The child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to another classroom with assigned work.
* Class teacher begins to record incidences of repeated and serious misbehaviour and consequences applied in pupil’s personal file.
* Teacher contacts the parents and informs them of what strategies have already been put in place in order to combat the inappropriate behaviour in the classroom.
* Teacher meets the parents, and agrees that child will be placed on report and will follow an individual behaviour plan until behaviour improves.
* Referral to the Deputy Principal/ Principal
* The Principal communicates with the parents and a meeting may be arranged with the parents, class teacher, other school staff who may be involved with the pupil, and the principal. A further behaviour plan will be put in place.
* Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular 7/88).

**SPECIFIC PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A STUDENT FAILS TO OBSERVE THE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or principal ***based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours***, as follows:

### Examples of minor misdemeanours:

Interrupting class work, Arriving consistently late for school, Running in school building, Talking in class line, Placing unfinished food/drink cartons in class bin, Leaving litter around school, Not wearing correct uniform, Being discourteous/unmannerly, Not completing homework without good reason, Not having homework signed by a parent, Rough play leading to unintended injury to self/fellow pupils.

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

* Deliberate ignoring of misbehaviour and praising adjacent pupil who is showing appropriate behaviour
* Verbal reprimand / reasoning with pupil
* Loss of privilege eg. class jobs, golden time activity
* The child is temporarily separated from peers within the classroom or on the yard e.g. in order to cool down and reflect on misbehaviour at Time out/ Thinking table or chair.
* The child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to another area near classroom with assigned work.
* Class teacher begins to record incidences of repeated minor misbehaviour and consequences applied in pupil’s personal file.
* Instances of repeated yard misbehaviour are recorded in yard book and passed to class teacher whose responsibility it is to record in pupil’s personal file and respond to it

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours:**

**Phase 1**

* Write story of what happened to be signed by parent (using age appropriate reflection sheets)
* Note in homework journal to be signed by parent
* Temporary separation from peers, within or in another classroom (Time Out: Thinking Time, eg. to complete behaviour reflection sheet)
* Removal of reward or privilege
* Teacher contacts the parents and informs them of what strategies have already been put in place in order to combat the inappropriate behaviour in the classroom.
* Teacher meets the parents, and agrees that child will be placed on report and will follow an individual behaviour plan based on the continuum of support outlined by NEPSuntil behaviour improves.

**Phase 2:**

* Send to Deputy Principal/Principal who will reiterate and reinforce the need to comply with agreed class and school rules and apply appropriate sanction.
* The Deputy Principal/ Principal communicates with the parents and a meeting may be arranged with the parents, class teacher, other school staff who may be involved with the pupil, and the principal. A school based behaviour plan will be put in place and then if necessary school support plus involving NEPS.

**Document: NEPS “Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties- A continuum of support”**

### Examples of serious misdemeanours

Constantly disruptive in class i.e. repeated instances of misbehaviour, persistent interruptions, the use of abusive and offensive language against teachers and students, any persistent misbehaviour that puts the educational welfare of other students at risk. Making untrue statements about others / Stealing / Damaging other pupil’s property /Bullying including cyber bullying / Back answering a teacher /refusing to comply with teacher instructions/ Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission / Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission / Deliberately injuring or being physically aggressive towards a fellow pupil or staff member ( spitting, hitting, kicking etc.) /**Deliberate misuse of internet or email access privileges.**

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:**

1. As per phase two outlined above
2. Chairperson of Board Of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal

Where there have been repeated instances of serious misbehaviour and all the above steps have been followed then suspension will be considered for a temporary period of time in accordance with the NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools. Cf. Appendix One for procedures to be followed for suspension and expulsion.

## Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

Vandalism - Setting fire to school property / Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on.

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil/ Bullying/Supply or use of illegal drugs/ Serious theft/ Bringing weapons to school

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours**

1. Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
2. Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) i.e.

“*No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality*”. Cf. Appendix One

**It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only: It is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.**

**RECORD KEEPING**

* Breaches of behaviour will be recorded in writing by the class teacher and if necessary by the deputy principal/ principal and will be stored in a class file which will pass from teacher to teacher at yearly handover.
* A yard incident book will be maintained noting behavioural incidents and accidents which occur in the yard
* A record will be kept in the principal’s office in a locked file of instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils.

**Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion**

**SUSPENSION**

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour.  The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour:

* The pupil’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
* 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

**Procedures for Suspension**

The Board of Management and Staff of Presentation Convent N.S. will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 – 12).

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person (p73). Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in gross misbehaviour (see above).

The Board of Management will also follow the factors to consider before suspending a student (p.72) and the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student (p82).

**In relation to suspension,**

* Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.
* The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
* The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p73). The parents/guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
* Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
* A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians
* A suspension will *not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer* than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective. The letter will confirm:

* + The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
  + the reasons for the suspension
  + any programme of study to be followed
  + the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
  + the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
  + the right to appeal to the Secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29).
* The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB ‘*Student Absence Report Form’* (when applicable).
* When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
* Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the chairperson of the Board of Management.
* If a pupil continues to misbehave s/he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil’s parents/guardians to address the issues.
* As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.
* The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
* Section 29 Appeal – when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

**PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION** – The procedures outlined on pages 83 – 86 of the guidelines will be followed (see steps 1-6 below):

* Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence - see p. 81 Guidelines. Expulsion for a first offence will apply in the event of:
* A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
* Actual violence or physical assault
* Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
* Sexual assault

**Steps to be taken in the event of a consideration of expulsion:**

Step 1 – A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

* Step 2 – A recommendation to the Board of Management
* Step 3 – Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal’s recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
* Step 4 – Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
* Step 5 – Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
* Step 6 – Confirmation of the decision to expel

**Procedures for notification of a pupil’s absence from school**

1. A written excuse must be presented explaining absence from school for any number of days or part thereof.

Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end of term closures when planning family holidays. It is inadvisable for students to miss time out of school term due to holidays. The school requests advance notification in writing should this occur.

1. If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. In the event of a child missing 20 days from school, parents will be informed of this in writing.

**Relationship to other school policies**

* Other relevant school policies (eg. Health & Safety, SPHE Plan, Enrolment, Learning Support and Special Needs Policy) will be referred to as appropriate.
* The school’s Anti Bullying Policy is attached to this policy.

**Success Criteria:**

* Observation of positive, respectful behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
* Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
* Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

**Review**

The policy will be revisited at staff meetings and will be reviewed as appropriate

Reviewed by the Board of Management: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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##### To be returned to the school

I have read the revised ***School’s Behaviour Policy (2013)*** . I agree to encourage my child to observe the rules of the school and I am willing to support the school in the implementation of all aspects of the Code of Behaviour.

**Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of Parent/ Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

### Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_