



1. Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by the school principal in consultation with the Board of Management, staff members, senior pupils and the Parent Association. The Code of Behaviour will apply to all pupils and during all school-related activities.

2. Rationale

- The Board of Management of Scoil San Nioclás decided to review the existing 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 pupils registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:
 1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
 2. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
 3. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school;
 4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil;
 5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

3. Relationship to Characteristic Ethos of our school

Scoil San Nioclás aims to enable each child to develop their potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. Our code of behaviour reflects the position of the child at the centre of the learning process. We aim to ensure that each child is provided with experiences that are relevant and age appropriate to their needs in a disruptive-free environment.

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.

4. Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of our school. The aim is to maintain an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can

feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. The principal aims will be:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline while recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To promote the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community;
- To assist parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures;
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

5. Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

Scoil San Nioclás recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children will become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The fundamental principle governing this code is respect – respect for ourselves and others and their property.

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

- to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults;
- to show respect for the property of the school, of other children and their own belongings;
- to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
- to do their best both in school and for homework.

Each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the pupils, that will reflect the age and maturity levels of the pupils in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and will be stated positively. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

6. 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. The policy shall apply to all pupils during all school related activities.

Scoil San Nioclás actively promotes good behaviour. To facilitate new members of staff in becoming 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. Time will be allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code and development of positive behaviour strategies. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience and to learn from collective wisdom.

The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this policy. A copy of the code will be given to parents at the start of each school year.

The following strategies are used to promote positive behaviour:

- Praise & recognition
- Positive play in the playground
- Buddy systems
- Reinforcement lessons and acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Whole school acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Reward systems in class for positive behaviour (Golden Time, Homework Passes, etc)
- Behaviour contracts
- Visit to another teacher or the Principal for praise of good behaviour or neat work

7. Rewards and Sanctions

The following strategies will be used by all teachers:

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child's exercise book;
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- A reward system – student of the week/occasional treats;
- Special mention at assembly;
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;
- A mention to parents – either written or verbal communication

Disapproval The following stages may be used to manage inappropriate behaviour in an age appropriate manner:

- Reasoning with pupils, including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve;
- Time out, if the incident occurs during playtime to allow the child reflect on their behaviour;
- Temporary removal from group, within the class;

Initially, instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. Teachers can use a problem solving approach in generating solutions and strategies with the pupil. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to “catch” repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, SESS, HSE or other agencies.

8. 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 having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following, though not exhaustive, are examples of minor misbehaviour:

*Interrupting class work *Running in the school building *Littering around the school *Being discourteous or unmannerly *Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian) *Inappropriate behaviour or gestures *Name calling *Minor infringement of school rules * Not wearing appropriate uniform

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Verbal reprimand;
- Time out (yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Instances of yard misbehaviour in the incident book and informing class teacher.

Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows, using one or more strategy:

Phase 1	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom); • Referral to another teacher with specific work when privileges are withdrawn; • Reflection sheet to be signed by child, parent and teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child will be sent to the Principal; • Formal letter from Principal informing parent of continuous misbehaviour; • Class teacher and/or Principal will meet with one/both parents.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following, though not exhaustive, are examples of serious misbehaviour:

*Constantly disruptive in class *Telling lies *Stealing *Damaging others' property *Bullying
*Back-answering a teacher *Continuously not completing homework *Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard *Using unacceptable language *Inappropriate use of the internet *Deliberate, continual disobedience

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)

Teachers will take steps as outlined for Phase 1 above but, depending on misbehaviour, may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour:

Phase 1	Phase 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom);• Referral to another teacher with specific work when privileges are withdrawn;• Reflection sheet to be signed by child, parent and teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child will be sent to the Principal;• An account of all incidents will be entered in the relevant Incident book;• Formal letter from Principal informing parent of misbehaviour;• Class teacher or yard duty teacher and Principal will meet with one/both parents;• Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

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

- Parents will be invited to meet class teacher and the Principal to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour;
- Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour, the Principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend a formal meeting at the school. Others who may also attend these meetings include class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty and Chairperson of the Board of Management. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate;
- 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 the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion. Communications

to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained).

Gross Misbehaviour

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

*Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school *Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate *Leaving school premises without permission *Deliberately injuring any member of the school community *Purposely activating school fire alarm *Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, biting, spitting) *Vandalism *Serious inappropriate behaviour *Assault

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

- Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately of the incident.
- The Board of Management has deferred authority to the Principal and Chairperson to impose an initial sanction if warranted of up to three days.
- 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 outline for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension.
- In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.
- When a pupil is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the pupil from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

During a period of suspension, the parent may apply to the school to have the pupil reinstated. Following any period of suspension, the parent must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal in consultation with the parent, the class teacher and the pupil will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be readmitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the board and the Principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case (see *Developing a Code of Behaviour - Guidelines for Schools* p.81) or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow pupils or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either pupils or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

9. Misbehaviour in the Yard

To pre-empt incidents of misbehaviour on yard, our whole school approach focuses on respect – respect for yourself, respect for others, respect for the environment. Incidents of yard misbehaviour or verbal abuse of staff will be dealt with as follows.

The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will do the following;

- Impose a period of *time out* where the pupil will be asked to remain in a specified place until allowed return to play;
- Fill out a report in the incident book;
- Inform the class teacher.

Repeated incidents of misbehaviour on the yard will be regarded as Serious Misbehaviour and will be treated accordingly.

10. Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community.

Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour by correspondence via the pupil's Homework Journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work.

Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to meet with them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour.

In specific cases, a shorter school day may be implemented where a pupil is having severe difficulties coping with a full day. This would be agreed between the Principal, Teacher, Parents and BOM.

11. Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally pupils may not respond positively to the usual interventions and may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of pupils may show particular challenging behaviour because of special educational need. These pupils will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

12. 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. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

13. Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in a specific journal and are retained until pupils reach 21 years. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

14. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents must notify the school in writing of a pupil's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents will be informed in writing when their child has been absent for 12+ days of school. Under current legislation, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

Reference to other Policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour are:

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- Child Protection

Success Criteria

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

- *Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment*
- *Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers*
- *Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.*

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil San Nioclás on 27th September, 2023.

Review Date: September 2024 or as necessary to the school's needs.

Signed: Kathleen Moran

Date: 27/9/2023

Chairperson of Board of Management