

# Code of Behaviour

## Naomh Mhuire N.S., Walsh Island



### Introduction

The Code of Behaviour of September 2016 was drawn up following consultation between the Board of Management, the school's teaching staff and representatives from the Parents' association, in accordance with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' (NEWB: 2008). A number of minor amendments took place in subsequent years, to ensure its clarity and readability. A comprehensive review of the Code took place during November 2018 involving consultation with parents, pupils, the school staff and the Board of Management.

### Rationale

The Code of Behaviour is designed to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported. We hope that life in our school, both in the classroom and at play, will be pleasant for all children and those who care for and teach them, as a result of this Code.

The Code also allows us to fulfil our legal requirements under the *Education Act 1998*, the *Education Welfare Act 2000* and to comply with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools*' (NEWB: 2008).

The Code of Behaviour plays an integral role in nurturing the characteristic spirit of our school, as outlined below.

### Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Naomh Mhuire NS is a primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Our school is committed to the following aims:

- Enabling each child to live a full life and to realise his/her full potential as a unique individual;
- Enabling each child to develop socially through interacting and co-operating with others;
- Preparing each child for further education, work and lifelong learning through the provision of appropriate learning opportunities;
- Creating an atmosphere conducive to the development of the child, based on fairness, respect and tolerance;
- Fostering, developing and maintaining a good home-school relationship.

Our school seeks to nurture the children in all dimensions of their lives and to provide quality learning experiences through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in a safe and happy environment (See *Mission Statement*).

We seek to foster a spirit of mutual respect within our school for everyone, including those of different religious affiliations, different nationalities and different abilities (See *Equality Statement*).

We maintain a close relationship with parents and local community and we encourage our pupils to participate in parish and community activities where appropriate. We

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recognise the importance of social and moral, as well as academic, education and the great importance of parental involvement in all aspects of their children's education.

### Aims

- Allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To promote good behaviour in our school
- To enhance the learning environment 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, happiness 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 Conduct and to seek their co-operation in the application of those procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Develop pupils' self-esteem and sense of responsibility and to foster respect for themselves and others
- Enable teachers to teach effectively without unnecessary disruption.

### Underlying Principles:

The principles of this Code of Behaviour are consistent with those of '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' (NEWB: 2008), namely that the Code:

- Provides clarity regarding what is expected of all members of the school community;
- Affirms that everyone's behaviour matters in the nurturing of an orderly, harmonious school;
- Focuses on promoting good behaviour;
- Balances the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable with the educational needs of other students in the school;
- Recognises that relationships of trust between staff and students are crucial;
- Focuses on personal responsibility and self-discipline;
- Ensures equity and fairness in its application;
- Recognises educational vulnerability and the commitment of the school to provide positive support to students;
- Attends to the welfare of students;
- Attends to the welfare of staff and other members of the school community;
- Promotes safety, dignity and freedom from threat of violence for all members of the school community.

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### **Attendance**

If a child is absent, a written or digital note explaining the reason for the child's absence must be sent to the class teacher, when the child returns to school. Parents are asked to plan family holidays around the school holiday calendar issued by the school. It is inadvisable for students to miss time out of school term due to holidays. If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. Parents are given a 15 day absence warning. In the event of a child missing 20 days from school, parents will be informed of this in writing.

### **Removal of pupils from school during the school day**

Parents who wish to collect their child from school during the school day must first present to the office to sign their child out of school. Teacher/secretary will collect the pupil from the classroom. Pupils must be signed in by their parents if they return to school having been signed out earlier by their parents. This is a necessary child protection strategy to protect all.

### **Strategies to affirm and promote positive behaviour**

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our code. All staff actively support our school ethos which emphasises care, respect and responsibility.

Positive relationships between teachers, parents and pupils are promoted alongside a happy school atmosphere.

Established 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 down after break times, noise levels for pair/group work, etc.

Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children. Each class will agree to a set of rules in terms of observable behaviours.

Teachers use a classroom management plan to promote positive behaviour. This includes the class rules, 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 will consult with them where necessary. It is essential to the efficient running of the school that parents ring the school secretary and make an appointment to see the class teacher or the principal (outside of class time) if they have concerns about their child's behaviour or progress. Where possible, we encourage parents to consult with the class teacher first, before bringing concerns to the principal.

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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. Social, Personal and Health Education in conjunction with the Behaviour management strategies and expectations is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem, respect and care for others.

### Rewards and praise

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

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- Stickers, smiley faces, ink-stamps and/or stars on pupil's work
- A visit to a staff member/principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Awarding with a special responsibility or privilege
- Informing parent – written/oral communication
- Class Dojos/assemblies/WOW walls

Rewards should be closely linked in time to the behaviour that is being rewarded. They will focus on effort and not solely on achievement. Rewards must avoid unhelpful competition and must be seen as attainable by all. It is necessary to ensure that praise is sensitive to the age and personality of the child as some may be embarrassed by public praise. A variety of rewards will be implemented to suit various ages and interests. Class rewards will encourage team spirit, a positive group identity and foster cooperative behaviour.

**The standards expected in the Code of Conduct apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school trips, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games.**

### Adults in our school community

All adults working and visiting the school are expected to work within an atmosphere of mutual respect. This atmosphere should permeate the school. It is expected that all staff, parents and visitors will interact in a polite, respectful and friendly manner. They are expected to model high standards as the example they set has an important influence on the children. All adults must adhere to this school's Child Protection Policy.

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### Pupils

In order to create an orderly environment in which pupils can feel safe and learn every pupil is expected to:

- Show respect for self and others
- Show kindness and willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners
- Show fairness and forgiveness
- Do their best in class
- Keep the rules
- Help create a safe, positive environment
- Attend school regularly and punctually

### Our school rules reflect these standards.

School opens at 9.20am

School closes at 2pm – Infants

School closes at 3pm – 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Classes

### Standards of behaviour expected in Naomh Mhuire NS:

The standards of behaviour expected in Naomh Mhuire NS require all members of the school community to show respect to each other, and therefore reflect values such as: respect for self and others, kindness and willingness to help others, courtesy and good manners, fairness, forgiveness, readiness to use respectful ways of solving difficulties and conflict. Children are expected to be committed to their own learning and that of their peers.

Taking the above into account, the general rules in operation in the school for pupils are listed below. Pupils may be involved, as appropriate, in devising rules specific to their own classrooms that are in keeping with the general standards of behaviour expected throughout the school. Additional specific rules may be communicated to pupils from time-to-time in response to changing school circumstances.

Parents are provided with the standards of behaviour expected in the school prior to the enrolment of their children, and, as a condition of enrolment, they are required to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them, and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child complies with the rules of the school.

### School rules from the pupil's perspective:

#### *My own safety:*

- I should always follow the instructions of the teachers, and remain in the areas designated at all times, as these instructions are issued for my own safety and well-being.

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- I should be careful throughout the day. In particular I should avoid swinging or climbing on posts, railings or furniture.
- I should always walk while in the school building and remain seated when instructed to do so and while eating lunch.
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher, and a note of explanation following absences should be submitted by my parent / guardian.
- I understand that I am expected to take responsibility for my own safety and behave in a sensible manner.
- I am aware that if I need to contact home this will be facilitated by a member of staff, as mobile phones and other internet accessible devices are forbidden (except when specific permission is granted).

### ***Caring for myself and my own learning:***

- I should always do my best by listening carefully, working as hard as I can in school and at home and by completing my homework daily.
- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day.
- I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, fizzy drinks or chewing gum are not permitted (See *Healthy Eating Policy*).
- I should always be in school when the bell rings at 9.20 a.m.

### ***Caring for others:***

- I should always show respect for, kindness to, and inclusion of my fellow pupils, teachers and all members of the school community. I know name-calling, vulgar language or spoiling games organised by others will not be tolerated.
- I should never touch others in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- I should not behave in a way likely to cause injury or discomfort to others.
- I should refrain from behaviours that interfere with my own learning and that of others.
- I should be truthful and honest at all times in my interaction with others and own up promptly if I have misbehaved.
- I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, school property as well as the school building and grounds and the local area.
- I understand that other people have different needs, opinions and experiences than me, and I should respect those differences.

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- I know that I must respect the legitimate authority of the school and its staff to impose a system of procedures, rules, rewards and sanctions that allow the school to function as a safe learning environment for all.

### **Yard rules**

- Include everyone and care for others in the yard
- Do what you are asked by all members of staff
- Rough play, exclusion of peers and name calling are not allowed
- Keep the rules of the game
- Line up safely and on time when the bell rings
- Hands and feet to yourself in the line and yard
- Show care for others
- Play with shared rules
- Always tell if you have a problem you can't solve

### **Misbehaviour and sanctions**

#### **Reducing opportunities for inappropriate behaviour**

All efforts are made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies are practiced, so as to sustain pupil interest and motivation.

The school practices effective supervision so that children have limited opportunities for poor behaviour. (See Supervision Policy Statement for details). In conjunction with this, the importance of self-discipline is emphasised, in an age-appropriate way.

#### **Home-school links**

The crucial importance of parental involvement in their children's learning and behaviour is recognised in the school. Behavioural as well as academic matters are discussed at parent-teacher meetings and on school reports, as well as more informal communication via class email. The children know that teachers will contact their parents for clarification and to report misbehaviour, and similarly parents are encouraged to contact teachers if they have concerns about their children's progress or behaviour in school. In some cases, ongoing regular parent-teacher meetings/communication form part of the behavioural management strategy. Teachers may also contact parents as a reward to children and to acknowledge exceptionally good progress or success. Parents are expected to actively support the school in upholding its Code of Behaviour.

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### Disapproval:

While all efforts are made to 'catch' pupils behaving well, thereby reinforcing positive behaviour, teachers do need on occasion to express disapproval for misbehaviour. Often expressing disappointment in the behaviour, and letting the pupil know that they have let themselves down, or the teacher, is adequate. Further sanctions that may be implemented are discussed in the following section.

## Sanctions for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

### Procedures for intervention

When addressing inappropriate behaviour, Naomh Mhuire NS uses a problem-solving approach, involving the following steps:

1. Gathering information to understand the context and factors influencing the behaviour
2. Formulating ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening
3. Deciding and agreeing specific strategies with the child / children involved
4. Implementing the agreed strategies consistently
5. Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention
6. Keeping the relationship with the pupil as positive as possible and prioritising the early involvement of parents

These steps are carried out informally or formally, with the involvement of various personnel (e.g. individual teacher, teacher and colleagues, teachers and parents, teacher, parents, multidisciplinary teams etc.) depending on the nature, circumstances and severity of the incident.

Inappropriate behaviour is described with reference to its nature, (e.g. unkind, disrespectful, hurtful, mean etc.) its intensity (e.g. planned, deliberate, rough etc.) and its persistence (e.g. repeatedly, daily, ongoing, occasionally etc.).

The response to inappropriate behaviour is understood as occurring at three levels of intervention:

- Support for all – most pupils behave appropriately with the help of consistent and clear guidelines, and only occasionally require intervention by the classroom teacher for minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

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- Additional support for some students – some pupils need more active intervention to help them improve their behaviour, such as a behaviour management plan which sets and monitors targets, the involvement of other teachers or a behaviour contract.
- Specialised support for a small minority of students – a few students may show particularly challenging behaviour and may need a sustained and systematic response from all the important adults in their lives to learn improved behaviours. They may also require the involvement of specialised support services such as NEPS, the HSE Community Services, the SESS, the NCSE, the Gardaí or Adolescent Mental Health Services etc.

While all attainable efforts will be made to help children fulfil their responsibilities under the Code of Behaviour, all pupils, regardless of the level of intervention they require, are bound by the provisions of the Code of Behaviour.

### Purposes of sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour through:

- Helping pupils realise that their behaviour is unacceptable
- Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviours on others
- Helping pupils to recognise (in a way appropriate to their age and development) that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- Helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour
- Reinforcing the boundaries set out in the Code of Behaviour
- Signalling to other pupils and staff that their well-being is valued and protected

In serious incidents, sanctions help:

- Prevent serious disruption to teaching and learning
- Keep the pupil, and other pupils and staff safe

### Good practice in the use of sanctions

- Sanctions should be used as a part of a plan to change behaviour. They should seek to defuse rather than escalate a situation, preserve the dignity of all the parties, and be applied in a timely manner. (In defining 'timely' consideration must be paid to the need in some cases to take time to investigate incidents when the facts are in dispute, to communicate with parents or to seek external advice, or to allow a situation to defuse before addressing it).
- They should be applied fairly and consistently, with regard to appropriateness and proportionality.
- Sanctions should be appropriate with regard to the age and development stage of the pupil.
- The level of sanction applied should be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the misbehaviour, determined with reference to the frequency,

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duration and persistence of the behaviour, whether it is part of an escalating pattern of poor behaviour and the context in which it occurred.

- The school's policy on sanctions should be communicated clearly to pupils and parents (e.g. through providing easy access to the Code of Behaviour for parents)

### Examples of unacceptable misbehaviours and potential sanctions

The minor, serious and gross misbehaviours listed below are provided as examples and should not be read as comprehensive or complete lists.

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, intensity, persistency and frequency of such misdemeanours, the degree of intent, the level of contrition, the age and understanding of the child, and the context in which the behaviour occurred.

### Examples of minor misdemeanours:

- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Interrupting class work
- Not completing homework without good reason
- Running / climbing in school building
- Being unacceptably noisy
- Being in the wrong zone on the yard
- Leaving seat without permission
- Not lining up when bell rings
- Leaving litter around school
- Not wearing correct uniform without good reason (See Uniform Policy Statement)
- Frequently arriving late for school
- Copying work from others
- Using unacceptable language
- Name calling or use of unpleasant nicknames
- Making rude or inappropriate gestures

### Dealing with occurrences of minor misdemeanours:

Minor misdemeanours will be dealt with at the discretion of the relevant teacher, through such strategies as:

- Reasoning with pupils
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Separation from peers
- Withdrawal from the particular activity or peer group
- Loss of privileges / privilege activities
- Noting of incidents in anecdotal records ie. Incident report book, child's file or Aladdin (confidential school administration system)
- Referral to other staff member

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- Communication with parents
- Detention during break time (time out spot)
- Requesting letter of apology
- Written activity to reinforce the rule broken
- Other sanctions as deemed appropriate to combat particular misbehaviour (e.g. misbehaviour on basketball court may result in a ban from that area for a period of time etc.)
- Carrying out a useful task within the school (e.g. litter pick up)
- Removal from a position of responsibility (e.g. bringing out yard equipment, ringing bell, going on messages etc.)
- From time to time, as deemed necessary by the Principal and staff, a school wide Behaviour Management Plan (within the parameters of this Code) may be formulated to tackle aspects of behaviour that are proving problematic at a particular time. This will typically specify the targeted behaviours, and the strategies to be used on a whole school basis to reduce or eliminate them.

Pupils are generally not deprived of engagement in a curricular area, unless their participation is deemed unsafe for themselves or others, or seriously disruptive to the learning of others. An alternative curricular activity may be provided for pupils whose participation in certain activities is deemed unsafe for themselves or others, or seriously disruptive to the learning of others (e.g. drill activities in PE if engagement in contact games is deemed too dangerous to be permitted, written rather than group work activities in class etc.)

Detention during break-time may take place in a classroom or the sensory room, supervised by a staff member, or the pupil may be asked to remain in the time-out spaces supervised by the staff member on yard duty. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the misbehaviour, detention may range in time and duration.

### **Examples of serious misdemeanours:**

- Repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour
- Refusing to comply with a sanction imposed for a minor misdemeanour
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Damaging or defacing school/ another pupil's property
- Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Causing physical or emotional hurt to others
- Serious disrespect or discourtesy to members of school community
- Persistent interruption to class work / interference in the learning of others
- Deliberately ignoring the direction of a staff member
- Encouraging others to breach the Code of Behaviour
- Leaving (or refusing to leave) designated areas without permission
- Involvement in actions likely to endanger self or fellow pupils or staff

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- Breaching the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Any action likely to bring the school into disrepute.

### **Examples of steps that may be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:**

- All incidences of serious misbehaviour are reported to the Principal
- The Board of Management can and does reserve the right to investigate any actions that are likely to bring the school into disrepute
- The relevant teacher investigates and records reports of serious misbehaviour. The nature, intensity and persistence of the behaviour, remorse of the pupil, extenuating circumstances etc. will dictate the form of the sanction/s imposed, in consultation with the Principal and/or other relevant staff members
- A sanction or combination of the sanctions listed above may be implemented by the relevant teacher/Principal. Pupils will be expected to apologise appropriately and make amends for any consequences of their misbehaviour (e.g. clean graffiti off a desk, reimburse school for cost of items damaged etc.)
- The Class teacher and/or SET (Special Education Teacher)/Deputy Principal/Principal may meet with the parents of the child involved with a view to resolving the issue and preventing such behaviour re-occurring.
- Individualised Behaviour Management Plans may be devised for pupils whose behaviour is of persistent and serious concern. In formulating behaviour management plans, the school staff will try to identify the reasons underlying the misbehaviour and implement interventions accordingly. These interventions may involve reducing the demands placed on children in school, (e.g. by reducing the curriculum load or implementing a reduced timetable), or by providing acceptable alternative behaviour choices for the pupil (e.g. movement breaks, de-escalation areas etc.). Behaviour Management Plans typically include ways to positively reinforce desired behaviour as well as ways to discourage inappropriate behaviour.
- If appropriate, assistance may be sought from relevant support services or a multidisciplinary team meeting convened to assist with the formulation of the Behaviour Management Plan and to advise on the most appropriate interventions for the particular child.
- If appropriate the pupil may attend /join the meeting with parents so that the agreed interventions can be explained in the presence of their parents and all can be assured of a clear understanding.
- A record of the incident/meeting/sanction imposed etc. are kept in the child's file along with copies of Behaviour Management Plans if applicable. A request to view a child's file may be made subject to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

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### **Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:**

- Repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour
- Refusing to comply with a sanction imposed for a minor or serious misdemeanour
- Serious breach of conditions of a behaviour management plan
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
- Intentional damage to the property of others
- Interference with school alarm / fire prevention systems
- Wilful damage to school building, furniture, books, equipment etc.
- Gross insubordination (open defiance)
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member / pupil.
- Self-harm that endangers self or causes distress to others
- Making false allegations against others
- Bringing weapons to school
- Sale or supply of illegal substances.
- Assault causing harm to others
- Sexual assault

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

- The steps outlined above with regard to serious misdemeanours also apply to incidences of gross misbehaviour.
- The Principal and/or relevant staff members will request a meeting with the parents of the pupil involved with a view to resolving the issue and to preventing the behaviour reoccurring. In cases of gross misbehaviour, the meeting will also typically involve the parents (and the pupil him/herself if appropriate) being reminded of the Principal's and the Board of Management's obligations with regard to maintaining good discipline in the school, the sanctions at the disposal of the Principal/Board, and the potentially serious consequences for the pupil's continued presence in the school if the misbehaviour persists.
- In some cases, the Chair of the Board of Management may meet with the parents to outline the Board's obligations with regard to health and safety, discipline, and as an Employer, to them, and to emphasise the serious view taken of the gross misbehaviour.
- The pupil and their parents will be expected to make amends for any loss suffered by the school (e.g. clean graffiti off a desk, reimburse school for cost of items damaged etc.) and/or to apologise to affected parties.
- In conjunction with the individualised Behaviour Management Plans described above, a Behaviour Management Contract may be devised, with the pupil and parents expected to sign up to a commitment to improve his/her behaviour.
- An incident form is completed for all incidents of gross misbehaviour and it is retained in the pupil's file.
- All incidents of assault on staff members are recorded, and if necessary, reported to the Board of Management, to allow it to fulfil its obligations as the Employer.

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- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher using the recording template Appendix 3 of 45/13 (Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools). At least once per term the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the number of cases reported to her using Appendix 3 since her previous report. (See Anti-Bullying Policy)
- The school will endeavour to support other pupils/staff members who may have been negatively affected by the gross misbehaviour in so far as possible.
- Depending on the severity and nature of the gross misdemeanour, the school may refer the incident to An Garda Síochána and/or Túsla or other agencies, as appropriate.
- In cases of sexual assault, the provisions of the Child Safeguarding Statement apply.

### Suspension

- In some cases of gross misdemeanour, suspension may be a proportionate and reasonable sanction. Suspension is defined as 'requiring the student to absent him/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days', (*Developing a Code of Behaviour NEWB 2008*).
- The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as:
  - A threat to safety (to the pupil themselves or others);
  - Physical assault/violence resulting in harm to a member of the school community;
  - A serious detrimental effect on the education of other students;
  - Serious damage to property;
  - A blatant disregard for the provisions of the Code of Behaviour of the school;
  - Refusal to comply with the provisions of a Behaviour Management Plan / contract;
  - Serious bullying incidences (including cyber bullying);
  - Repeated incidences of misbehaviour with no improvement.
- While the school endeavours to apply principles of fair procedures (the right to be heard, the right to impartiality) to all investigations, these principles are of particular relevance when grave sanctions such as suspension (or expulsion) are a possibility. The degree of formality required in implementing fair procedures will depend on the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and the seriousness of the possible sanction (e.g. less formality required in procedures leading to a suspension of three days or less, than would be required if expulsion was being considered).

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- With regard to an investigation that may lead to the imposition of a suspension (or expulsion), the right to be heard involves:
  - The right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
  - The right to know the details of the allegations made and other information that will be taken into account
  - The right to know how the issue will be resolved
  - The right to respond to the allegations
  - The right to be heard by the decision-making body
  - The right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts
- With regard to an investigation that may lead to the imposition of a suspension (or expulsion), the right to impartiality means:
  - The right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker
  - The right to impartiality in the investigation and in the decision-making
- The Principal has been authorised by the Board of Management to sanction immediate suspension of a pupil, for up to three days, if the continued presence of the pupil in the school is judged, after a preliminary investigation, to be a danger to any member of the school community, and a formal investigation will commence after the suspension is imposed. Parents will immediately be informed and arrangements made for the student to be collected.
- In other cases, where the behaviour appears serious enough to warrant suspension, but there is no apparent immediate danger to anyone's safety, the behaviour will be investigated, parents and student will be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond, before the suspension is imposed. The Board of Management has authorised the Principal to impose a suspension for up to three days in such circumstances.
- Generally, if a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. However, the Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension for up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance covering such suspensions.
- The Board of Management has imposed a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it, except in exceptional circumstances where the safety of pupils necessitates a longer period of suspension, or during the twenty day period following the decision to expel a pupil. The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil that would bring the total number of days the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more, as such a suspension would be subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act

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- When a decision has been made to suspend a pupil, written notification will be provided to the parents stating: the dates and duration of the suspension, the reasons for the suspension, any study programme to be followed, the arrangements for returning to school, including the commitments that are to be entered into by the parents and the pupil, and the right of appeal to the Board of Management. In cases of immediate suspension this written notification will be provided as soon as practicable after the suspension has been imposed.
- The Principal's decision to impose a suspension may be appealed to the Board of Management. The Board of Management will be informed at each meeting of any suspensions imposed since the previous meeting.
- On return from suspension the Principal will usually meet with the parents and/or pupil to help ensure the misbehaviour does not occur again. The parents and the pupil may be asked to re-affirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour and Behaviour Management Plan / Contract (if applicable).

### Expulsion

- Expulsion is defined as 'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000'.
- The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management of Naomh Mhuire NS
- The school recognises the gravity of expulsion as a sanction and will consider it only in extreme cases and as a last resort when all avenues of discussion, negotiation and mediation have been exhausted.
- Prior to this, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour, such as:
  - Meeting with the parents and pupil to try find ways to help the pupil change his/her behaviour;
  - Ensuring the pupil and his/her parents understand the consequences of their behaviour if it persists;
  - Trying to change the behaviour through imposing other sanctions as outlined above;
  - Seeking the assistance of relevant support agencies, such as NEPS, Primary Care Psychology, Túsła, SESS, NCSE, CAMHS etc. as appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the child

The decision to expel a student requires serious grounds, such as:

- A threat to safety (to the pupil themselves or others);
- A serious detrimental effect on the education of other students;
- Serious damage to property;
- A blatant disregard for the provisions of the Code of Behaviour of the school.

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While these are similar to the grounds for suspension, factors such as persistence, lack of contrition, and the seriousness of the behaviour, as well as the belief that the school has exhausted all other options will influence the decision of the Board to expel a pupil.

In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management may form the view that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. Such offences include:

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

➤ When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms gross misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps are followed:

1) A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal:

- Written notification provided to parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and the possibility that it could result in expulsion
- Parents and the pupil are given every opportunity to respond before a decision is made and the sanction is imposed. The parents and the pupil are invited to a meeting where they can give their side of the story, parents can make the case for lessening the sanction, and other options for improving
- If parents refuse to attend the meeting, the Principal writes advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of them attending a rescheduled meeting, and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision in response to the misbehaviour.
- A record is kept of the correspondence with parents.

2) A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

- Parents are informed that the Board is being asked to consider expelling the pupil.
- Ensure parents have records of the allegations against the student and the investigation undertaken, as well as written notification of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board with the same comprehensive records as given to the parents
- Notify the parents of the date of the Board of Management hearing and invite them to that hearing, ensuring that they have enough notice to prepare for the hearing

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- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management

### 3) Consideration of the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing

- The Board reviews the investigation and satisfies itself that it was conducted in line with fair procedures.
- At the hearing, the parents and the Principal, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party is allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. In line with Board procedures, parents may be accompanied to the hearing. Parents may make the case for a lesser sanction to be imposed.

### 4) Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

- No party who has had involvement in the case can be present for the Board's deliberations after the hearing.
- If the Board comes to the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board writes to the Educational Welfare Officer to inform him/her of this. The pupil cannot be expelled until twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives the notification. The pupil may be suspended during this period if his/her presence in the school is deemed a threat to safety or likely to seriously disrupt the learning of other pupils.
- The Board informs the parents in writing of its decision and the next steps in the process.

### 5) Consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer

- The EWO is expected, within the twenty day period, to arrange individual consultations with the parents and pupil, the Principal and anyone else likely to be of assistance
- Representatives from the school will attend a meeting with the EWO and the parents (if they agree to attend) to discuss the educational interests of the pupil involved.

### 6) Confirmation of the decision to expel (if applicable)

- Where the twenty day period has elapsed, and the Board remain of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board formally confirm the decision to expel. This task is delegated to the Principal and Chairperson, who notify the parents in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents are also informed of their right to appeal and are provided with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A formal record of the decision to expel the pupil is placed in the pupil's file. – The parents of the pupil may appeal an expulsion to the Secretary General of the Department of Education, in accordance with Section 29, Education Act 1998. An

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appeal may also be brought by the Educational Welfare Officer on behalf of a pupil.

### **Concerns with regard to behaviour matters**

- Parental or pupil concerns or queries with regard to behaviour matters are to be raised with the class teacher of the pupil/s involved in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved, it may then be brought to the attention of the Principal.
- Teachers may be contacted by telephone, email or written note, and an appointment to meet is then arranged if a discussion of the issue is required.

### **Pupils with special needs**

Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's Code of Conduct but teachers will use their professional judgement in relation to regularity and level of above sanctions. While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of misdemeanours, they will also show understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties. Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child improve his/her behaviour. This may involve working and co-operating with a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class, and/or agreeing a behaviour plan. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies as mentioned previously.

### **Child Protection Policy**

This school follows Children First; National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures from the Department of Education and Skills (2017).

### **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

The Principal will act as DLP. The Deputy Principal shall act as Deputy DLP. The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all dealings with HSE, an Garda Síochána and parties involved in each case of concern. All matters pertaining to the process or investigation of child abuse should be processed through the DLP. Further information on the responsibilities of the DLP can be found in 'Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures' – Dept. Of Education and Skills (DES). Action to be taken by the DLP in cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or where an allegation has been made are in DES Guidelines.

### **Action taken by DLP**

If a school employee and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or allegation, the DLP should report the matter to the relevant HSE authority

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immediately. The school will ask and follow the advice given by the duty social worker with regard to contacting parents of those involved. Phone contact should be made with the duty social worker first and then the standard HSE Form for reporting child protection and/or welfare concerns should be filled out. A copy of this form is in Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Where possible, the DLP should make every effort to speak to a social worker to seek advice on the child protection issue of concern at the earliest opportunity. If the DLP is unsure of what action to take the Duty Social Worker will advise on the matter over the phone. In the event of an emergency or the unavailability of HSE staff the report should be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda Station. All staff working in the school must be garda vetted. SNAs, caretaker and secretary are vetted via Archbishop's House. Teaching staff are vetted by the Teaching Council. All visitors to the school are supervised by class teachers/SNA/Secretary in all dealings with the children in the school. All classrooms and learning support rooms have glass panels on the doors and/or windows to protect pupils and staff.

### **Peer abuse**

#### **General Guidelines:**

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser – there are child protection issues for both children. All abusers must be held accountable for their behaviour and work must be done to ensure that abusers take responsibility for their behaviour and acknowledge that the behaviour is unacceptable. If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance. Abusive behaviour which is perpetrated by children must be taken seriously and it is important that such cases are referred to the HSE. The school will ask and follow the advice given by the duty social worker with regard to contacting parents of those involved.

#### **Written Reports**

It is recommended that all reports should include as much as possible of the information sought in the Standard Reporting Form. When a report is made to the HSE, the Chairperson of the BOM should be informed. The parents of the child should be informed that a report is being made to HSE even if they are implicated in the report. However, if it is felt that this poses a danger to the victim, advice on the procedure to follow should be sought from the duty social worker.

#### **Confidentiality**

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should be shared on a need-to-know basis, in the interest of the child. The baseline for need-to-know is whether or not the person has any legitimate involvement or role in dealing with the issue.

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### **Stay Safe Programme**

The Stay Safe Programme is taught to all pupils in the school at several stages in their development. Teaching staff ensure Stay Safe course content is age appropriate.

### **Keeping records**

A copy of the end of year reports is kept on file for all pupils.

Results of standardised tests are in locked storage in the secretary's office.

Each pupil has a file containing examples of their work, test results, attendance record etc. These are stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Individual assessments from outside agencies are kept in pupil's own file in locked storage in the secretary's office.

Notable/Serious incidents which occur during break times are recorded in the Discipline book.

Letters re. Behaviour sent to parents are kept in pupil's personal file in locked storage in the secretary's office. Correspondence relating to suspension/expulsion are stored there also. Correspondence between parents and teacher in journal may be copied and stored in pupil's personal file.

Correspondence relating to absence is stored in the children's files/classroom.

Special Educational Needs notes will be kept in the pupil's file.

Notes relating to Child Protection will be kept in Designated Liaison Person's book and locked in principal's office.

Documents relating to Section 29 appeals will be kept locked in principal's office.

### **Communicating and implementing the code**

All parents will be issued with a copy of the Code of Conduct.

Teaching staff will endeavour to ensure that all parents can access and understand the code.

Children will be made aware of school rules and special effort will be made to ensure that pupils with special educational needs understand the school rules, the reward systems and the consequences of misbehaviour. SPHE lessons, DVDs and role play may be used to ensure these pupils understand cause and effects of behaviour. Teachers will teach the Code of Conduct to pupils in an age-appropriate manner.

### **Understanding behaviour**

The staff of Naomh Mhuire NS are aware of the factors that affect behaviour. These factors include external and interpersonal factors such as family patterns and relationships, peer groups/friends, neighbourhood and community factors. Personal factors such as age and stage of development, social skills, personality and temperament, ability to learn, physical and medical characteristics also affect behaviour. The staff believe that pupil's behaviour can change and will endeavour to assist pupils to modify their behaviour.

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### **Interventions and supports – options**

Classroom management plan as agreed with all students at start of year.

Social skills programme, promotion of friendship and self esteem as part of S.P.H.E.

Organised activities at yard/lunch time by teacher on yard/SNA/older children.

Use a behavioural checklist eg. NEPS booklet “Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support”.

A Behaviour Plan may be put in place if pupils persist with challenging/disruptive behaviour. The plan will focus on a small number of targets. The pupil is central to the drawing up of the plan under the advice and direction of a teacher, in conjunction with parent/SNA/SET. If a pupil has access to SET to support their emotional and behavioural needs the support teacher may set targets in consultation with the pupil and their parents. For pupils who exhibit particularly challenging behaviour, outside agencies will be consulted eg. National Psychological Service (NEPS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Special Education Support Service (SESS), HSE Community Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education. The Board of Management will monitor class size and its impact on student behaviour and classroom management.

### **Procedure for resolution of complaints**

Complaints are resolved under guidelines laid down in the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association Handbook.

#### **Stage 1**

Parent/Guardian should go to class teacher to resolve complaint.

If unresolved, complaint should be referred to the Principal.

If complaint is still unresolved the matter should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 of complaints procedure are available on CPSMA website, from the Principal and/or Chairperson of Board of Management.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The Teaching Staff:**

To co-ordinate, monitor and implement the policy in partnership with parents

To model positive behaviour

To manage the classroom in such a way that children are positively engaged

To involve pupils in drawing up classroom rules

To teach the rules in a way that is age/ability appropriate

To display rules in classroom and model desired behaviour

To communicate issues of concern to parents/guardians via homework journal / email / home school liaison notebook

#### **The Ancillary Staff:**

To model positive behaviour

To encourage pupils to follow rules and report to teaching staff when rules are broken

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To prioritise health and safety and report dangerous/rough/unkind behaviour  
To co-operate with implementation of the code  
To liaise with parents via home school communication notebook  
Can withdraw the children for sensory / movement breaks to help children with self regulation

### **Parents/Guardians:**

To co-operate with school in the implementation of this and all other policies  
To encourage pupils to keep the school rules  
To model positive behaviour  
To ensure pupils attend school punctually and regularly  
To provide school with written explanation of dates and reasons for all absences on pupil's return to school and to furnish school with a phone number and email address that will enable school to contact parent/guardian in the case of an emergency  
To attend a minimum of one parent-teacher meeting annually  
To pack a nutritious lunch for their child daily  
To support their child to complete their homework and sign their homework journal when homework is completed  
To ensure their child wears the correct school uniform and appropriate footwear to school daily  
To ensure pupils with long hair tie it up at all times  
To take responsibility for their child's conduct and safety outside of school hours  
To keep channels of communication with class teacher open via homework journal /email  
To encourage their child to tell staff about anything that upsets them during the school day as soon as the incident occurs (bullying prevention strategy)

### **Application of the Code of Behaviour**

The Code of Behaviour applies to all school-arranged activities, regardless of their location.

The Board of Management of Naomh Mhuire SN does not accept responsibility for pupils before 9.10am (classes start at 9.20 am), or after the official closing time (3.00pm for 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> classes, 2.00pm for Infants), unless pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity that has been approved by the Board of Management. Parents are informed in advance of any change in school opening hours. Supervision is not provided outside of the notified opening hours, regardless of whether staff are on the school premises or not.

# Code of Behaviour

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### Success Criteria

Indicators of the success of this policy will include:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playgrounds and school environment, with few incidences of misbehaviour
- Pupils exhibiting self-discipline
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Consistent implementation of the practices and procedures outlined in this policy.
- A happy and caring school environment
- Observation of behaviour in class rooms, corridors and the yard

### Implementation

This policy reflects the ongoing practice of the school.

### Timetable for Review

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed informally on an ongoing basis as circumstances and experience dictate. Unless legislative or other changes require it to be reviewed earlier, it will be due for formal review during the school year 2023/24

### Glossary

CPSMA: Catholic Primary School Management Association

NEWB: National Education Welfare Board

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service

SESS: Special Education Support Service

NCSE: National Council for Special Education

SENO: Special Education Needs Organiser

### Ratification and Communication

A copy of the Code of Behaviour is sent to parents before enrolment and is available on the school website. Each teacher has been provided with a copy, and copies are available from the school upon request.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Naomh Mhuire NS, Walsh Island on: October 13<sup>th</sup> 2021

Rev Sean Hegland      Caitriona Kerin