

Code of Behaviour Policy

1. School Ethos

Scoil Chormaic responds to the needs of our children by providing a safe stable caring environment so that students have opportunities to learn. This holistic approach that promotes spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development gives a variety of experiences necessary so that each student may achieve their full potential as members of the wider society.

2. Aim of Code of Behaviour and Discipline

- To create an environment in which pupils will have respect for themselves.
- To create an environment in which pupils will have respect for their fellow pupils.
- To create an environment in which the pupils will have respect for the property and school they attend.
- To create an environment where justice and fairness can be realised and seen to be realised.
- To create an environment where every students right to benefit fully from the school day will be protected and realised.
- To create an atmosphere of openness and trust, sharing and giving so that the daily life of the school will operate happily, smoothly and benefit all.

In defining this code great consideration has been given to the particular individual needs and circumstances of those attending. We aim to provide a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour by all concerned, staff, parents and students alike. Every effort must be made to accommodate the individuality of each student while acknowledging the right of each student and staff member to learn and work in a safe environment and be treated with respect and dignity. This code extends to the environs of the school.

Cognitive Ability

Scoil Chormaic is a school for pupils in the range of MGLD and those who have a diagnosis of A.S.D. The Code of Behaviour recognises that each student functions at an individual level of understanding and the implementation of the code and sanctions imposed will be exercised with discretion by Principal, Staff and Board of Management. This involves taking into consideration Psychologists reports indicating cognitive functioning and staff's own interactions with pupils which have indicated their level of understanding.

3. Rules

1. *THAT STUDENTS COME TO SCHOOL EVERYDAY THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THEM TO BE THERE AND ARE PUNCTUAL.*

This Means:

- That students attend unless it is absolutely unavoidable
- That staff are notified if a student is not coming – staff being bus escort, school secretary.
- On return to school a note is brought to explain absence.
- Students are not sent to school if sick or suffering from infectious or contagious conditions.
- Students arrive for or are ready for school transport at allocated time.
- Students walking to school arrive on time.

Because:

- Time missed is hard to make-up
- The school is entitled to an explanation
- The school is responsible for students school time
- Out of courtesy and respect to all those who care and teach students
- Good attendance and good time keeping helps students and staff to do well

2. *THAT STUDENTS DO THEIR BEST TO PARTICIPATE IN CLASSWORK AND ACTIVITIES*

This Means:

- That students listen to the teachers, care staff and Principal
- That students do not disrupt the work of other students wilfully and knowingly
- That students do not destroy class materials, classroom property or furniture wilfully and knowingly
- That students try their best to participate in classroom work and activities

Because:

- Teachers have a right to teach in a safe respectful environment
- Care staff have a right to assist to the needs of students and implement programmes of work in a safe respectful environment
- Other students have a right to learn in a safe stable, caring, respectful environment
- Each student must support the work of teaching and care staff
- It helps all to succeed in school

3. THAT STUDENTS COME TO SCHOOL PROPERLY PREPARED FOR THE SCHOOL DAY

This Means:

- That if students require aids, appliances due to a physical or sensory disability they bring them in good working order or respectfully request that school personnel assist in getting advice or help to fix aids appliances etc.
- That if medication is prescribed students are given medication regularly in accordance with prescription.
- That if parents require medication to be given in school, a written request is submitted giving exact details and medication is delivered to school by parent or responsible adult.
- That students bring a balanced lunch with them and something for small break. If this is not suitable due to dietary restrictions school is notified and arrangements are made.
- That students come able to participate i.e. that they have had adequate sleep.

Because:

- Students can only benefit from school if there is as much routine, regularity and order in their lives as possible given individual personalities, abilities and level of functioning.
- Some student can only cope with a school day if they have medication that has been prescribed by a Doctor. Over administration withdrawal or under medication is not appropriate and could be abusive to a child.
- Aids and appliances can be dangerous if not minded and kept in proper working order.
- Children need to have their physical needs met appropriately so they can participate fully in the school day.

4. STUDENTS COME TO SCHOOL IN UNIFORM OR ACCEPTABLE APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

This Means:

- That where possible students wear the uniform of the school
- We do not make uniform compulsory, however students must come wearing enough clothes to keep them warm and appropriately dressed i.e. dressed for school.
- Jewellery, earring must be safe and reasonable in size and quantity.

Because:

- Part of educational and personal development is to know how to dress appropriately for different occasions and environments
- Part of our stay safe policy encourages and explains to students the importance of protection of the body.
- Safety is everybody's responsibility.
- We all have a responsibility to maintain a positive healthy image of school.
- Final decision on acceptable standards of appearance and dress will rest with the school management.

5. THAT STUDENTS HAVE RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION FOR OTHER STUDENTS

This Means:

- Being fair to everyone.
- Helping other students if they need help.
- Not picking on or bullying others.
- Not taking advantage of those less able.
- Not fighting in or out of school.
- Not teasing or name calling.
- Not engaging in messing or dangerous play.

- Following the rules with regard to using apparatus.
- Respecting the property of others.

Because:

- Mutual respect is important
- We all like to be treated fairly and with dignity and be understood and accepted for who we are.
- Bullying, name calling, teasing causes hurt, anger, misery and fear.
- Serious accidents or injury can occur if respect and care is not shown to people or property.
- School building and property is expensive to repair, maintain and develop. To damage is to show lack of respect for the school community.

6. STUDENTS MUST SHOW COURTESY, CONSIDERATION AND GOOD MANNERS AND A PLEASANT ATTITUDE IN INTERACTION WITH TEACHER, STAFF MEMBERS, SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, VISITORS, THERAPISTS, TRANSPORT STAFF AND LOCAL RESIDENTS.

This Means:

- Co-operating in class to the student's best ability.
- Not being knowingly wilfully aggressive in behaviour or language.
- Taking as much direction and guidance from all staff as possible.
- Showing respect to all in our school community.

Because:

- The smooth safe beneficial running of a class and school area depends on respect.
- The opportunities for learning need to be maximised.
- The opportunities for therapy and intervention need to be maximised.
- Mutual respect between home and school is vital.

7. THAT STUDENTS RESPECT THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

This Means:

- Keeping the school clean and free of litter.
- Not chewing gum unless given permission by school staff.
- Not defacing or destroying property, desks, walls etc.

Because:

- Everybody benefits from working in a clean healthy, safe environment.
- Chewing gum destroys clothes, carpets and can be unhygienic.
- The school is owned by T.A.S.N and we only have the use of it therefore we mind it.

8. STUDENTS MUST NOT LEAVE SCHOOL GROUNDS UNACCOMPANIED

9. THE SCHOOL SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY FORBIDS POSSESSION OR USE OF CIGARETTES, ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES OR WHILE ENGAGING IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

10. THE SCHOOL MOBILE PHONE POLICY BANS THE USE OF CAMERA PHONES ON THE SCHOOL BUS AND PREMISES.

11. THE SAFE USE OF INTERNET POLICY BANS USE OF INTERNET FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE.

Strategies Used to Promote Positive Behaviour

- Non- verbal sign e.g. look/frown.
- Change in tone of voice.
- Moving physically closer to the pupil.
- Some behaviour may be overlooked by ignoring.
- Quiet reprimand /reminder.
- Reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Calming down pupil by distraction techniques.
- Reminder of rule being broken and consequence if continues.
- Staff may be required to use a raised voice if there is an immediate present danger, to alert pupils to this, or to prevent a pupil from carrying out a dangerous action which will cause harm to him/her or another pupil.
- Moving pupil to another seat.
- Depending on pupils individual needs, withdrawal of pupil to a quiet closely supervised environment until calm.
- These pupils will be offered a quiet place to calm down and reflect. Staff member will remain in the room, or at the entrance to the room where they can view the pupil, as the pupil calms. A pupil may only be reintegrated into class once fully calm.
- Remove others from the area.
- Staff will reflect on the behaviour, and assess if any preventive technique can be implemented to prevent further incidents.
- Referral to Principal.

SANCTIONS

In cases of unacceptable behaviour it will be in the best interest of the school community and the student involved explaining or demonstrating verbally, pictorially or gesturally that the behaviour is not acceptable, dangerous or inappropriate. It is hoped that a student and his/her parents/guardians will respond positively and supportively to this and that the student will reflect on or accept that unacceptable behaviour is wrong. It is hoped that students will then change behaviour to meet the expectations of the school. It is hoped that parent/guardians will at all times support and affirm good behaviour in school and on the school bus.

Episodes of challenging behaviour may occur from time to time at varying levels of intensity. At all times, the health and safety of all pupils and staff is our priority.

Physical intervention/physical rights restriction may be necessary to assist and prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Placing himself/herself at serious risk.
- Placing other pupils or staff at serious risk.
- Behaviour leading to damage to property where the damage may lead to placing the pupil, staff or other pupils at serious risk.

Physical intervention is not a punishment or sanction, but a behaviour management mechanism to reduce the risk of injury or harm to the student themselves, staff members or other students. The well being and safety of the individual and the school community members is of paramount importance. The school has adopted the CPI non violent Crisis Intervention Training Program (MAPA)

All staff training in Positive Behaviour Management. 15 staff completed a second day's training in CPI techniques.

Physical interventions are only used as a last resort where all other strategies have failed. CPI provides staff with a repertoire of crisis management techniques that can be used as a behaviour management mechanism to help reduce the risk of harm to the individual, staff or other students.

Following a critical incident that involved a physical intervention, it is mandatory to complete an incident report form. Parents are to be informed by phone and given access to the completed incident form.

A review meeting is to be conducted following any critical incident warranting a physical intervention. These meetings are to involve all relevant staff and parents (pupil where possible).

Breaches of the code of behaviour will be dealt with as follows on a referral system.

1. Explanation of behaviour. Why it is not acceptable.
2. Every effort made to teach a different appropriate way of acting or reacting ensuring that the child's individual level of understanding and need is fully recognised.
3. Praise and affirm good behaviours that occur at every possible opportunity e.g. Positive behaviour charts are displayed in classrooms and school areas.

4. Telephone/written communication with parents/guardians requesting support.
5. Meeting with parents/guardians.
6. Referral if appropriate to school psychologist.
7. School attendance on a fixed time basis until behaviour stabilises.
8. Referral to social services if appropriate.
9. Referral to Gardai if appropriate.
10. Referral to B.O.M. for suspension, exclusion.

EDUCATION WELFARE ACT.

Responsibilities parent and schools have arising from the Act

The purpose of the Educational Welfare Act is to encourage school attendance and prevent students from dropping out of school. A National Education Welfare Board has been established and an Educational Welfare Service has been put in place. Now as a parent you must let the school know if your child is absent and the reason for the absence. It is best to do this in writing. Every school must notify the E.W.B. if a student is absent for more than 20 days in the school year.

If a student misses 20 days or more of school an Officer of the E.W.B. will look with the parents and Principal to see why student has been absent. Exceptional circumstances such as illness or hospitalisation will be understood. The E.W.B will see what needs to be done to ensure that the student receives his full entitlement to education.

Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Through its code of behaviour Scoil Chormaic aims to create a calm, safe, ordered nurturing educationally viable school based on respect for self and respect for others. In cases where pupils fail to observe the code of behaviour or in cases where a student's behaviour is so extreme that it causes an unacceptable level of disruption in class or hurt, injury damage to others, danger to themselves or serious damage to property, it is necessary for the good of the school community as a whole to impose sanctions on such pupils including suspension or exclusion where warranted.

This policy outlines the schools approach to suspension and exclusion has been formulated taking due consideration of the rights and responsibilities inherent in the Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000, Equal Status Act 2000, Education for Persons with Special Educational Need Act 2004, The Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989, The Children's Act 2001, The Offences against Person Act 1997. The overall responsibility for running the day-to-day affairs of the school rests with the Principal and is accountable to the B.O.M. for implementing policies and procedures. This will be made known to all pupils, parents and staff and to ensure as far as possible, consistency and fairness in their application.

Parents must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child complies with the school code of behaviour. Where a parent or student requests a copy of the code of behaviour, the Principal shall provide one to them.

The Principal has the authority to suspend a pupil for a period up to and including 3 days. Suspensions

beyond 3 days are the responsibility of the B.O.M. The Principal/B.O.M. will exercise this authority in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, having regard to his/her responsibility to the whole school community and to the principles of natural justice.

The primary purpose of suspension is one of corrective support rather than punishment. Suspension will allow time for a situation to diffuse, time to counsel the injured party and give time to the suspended student to understand their behaviour has consequences. It will give time so that hopefully the student will take on board the need to change behaviour to meet the expectations of the school.

There are 2 sets of circumstances under which suspension will be imposed.

- a) Serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour that indicates that the pupil should be removed from the school. In cases where health and safety could be a risk it may be necessary to suspend a student with immediate effect pending an investigation and the following of due procedures.
- b) Repeated less serious breaches of the C.O.B. that have not been rectified by disciplinary measures short of suspension. In such cases formal written warning detailing the unacceptable behaviour will have been submitted to parents along with an explanation of what is required by students, parents/guardians.

Breaches of the Code of Behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Endangering the safety and health of the individual themselves or any member of the school community.
- Disrespect or defiance towards a member of staff or harassment or intimidation or the bullying of another member of the school community.
- Possession, use or supply of prohibited substances (including alcohol, drugs) in the school, on trips or in the course of any school related activity.
- Deliberate vandalism including the writing of graffiti in relation to school property or the property of a member of the school community.
- Interference with or persistent reasonable instruction of staff members on a repeated basis.
- Smoking anywhere in or around the school.
- Deliberate use of obscene, abusive or inappropriate language.
- Stealing, fighting or the possession of offensive weapons. In addition to being serious breaches that incur suspension these are criminal offences that will be reported to the

appropriate authorities.

- Inappropriate use of camera phones.
- Inappropriate use of the internet.

Suspension Procedure

1. Where possible pupils will be informed of the precise grounds that gave rise to the suspension.
2. Where possible pupil will be given an opportunity to respond before a suspension is formalised.
3. The Parent will be contacted either by phone or letter and told the reason for suspension. Parents will be given an opportunity to respond and visit the school to discuss how best to help the student.
4. If the suspension is to last more than 3 days it will be referred to the B.O.M.
5. Parents will be given a formal letter of notification that will include
 - Notice of suspension
 - Effective date of suspension
 - Duration of the suspension

Reasons for the Suspension

Where appropriate this letter may also include some or all of the following:

- Reference to the importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter causing suspension.
- A statement that the pupil is under the care and responsibility of the parent/guardian while suspended.
- A statement that the E.W.B. has been informed of the suspension.
- Information of the appeal rights and procedures regarding the suspension.
- Requirement to meet before the pupil returns to school to outline expectation of the pupil on return.

Suspension Removal

As the principles of natural justice demand that there should be available a right to appeal to a higher authority parent/guardians may appeal. The Principal's decision to suspend (this refers to a period of up to 20 days) such an appeal must be made in writing to the B.O.M. stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. However the school may insist that the pupil remain at home while the appeal proceeds. In the event that the appeal is successful the suspension will be lifted if the suspension has been served it will be expunged from the pupil's record.

An appeal of a suspension may also be made under Section 29 of the Education Act where a student has been suspended for 20 days or more. Information regarding the right of appeal will be provided with formal notification of the suspension if applicable.

Beyond success in such appeals, a suspension may be rescinded in the following circumstances.

New circumstances come into play or to light after the suspension has been applied that would have mitigated the sanction had they been known beforehand.

Other mitigating factors consistent with the application of the principles of natural justice.

Suspension Completion

Upon completion of a suspension, the following procedures may apply for the formal re-introduction of the pupil into school.

- Parents may be requested to attend with the pupil upon his/her return to school.
- A written or verbal apology may be required of the pupil for his misbehaviour.
- The pupil may be required to enter into a contract of good behaviour or other conditions that may be specified before returning to school.
- In some instances to support a successful return to school certain interventions may need to be agreed (e.g. reduced day/reduced timetable/professional therapeutic support).

Exclusion Principles

Exclusion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school on a pupil and as such will only be exercised by the Board of Management in relation to cases of extreme and persistent breaches of the Code of Behaviour. In cases where the Principal judges that a pupil's actions are such that exclusion should be considered, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure may be used in an extreme case, in accordance with the principles set out below and with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In general, there are two sets of principles in which exclusion may be considered to be appropriate by the school.

a) Cases where the in-discipline of a pupil is so pervasive that teaching and learning become extremely difficult. Such cases include but are not limited to:

- The pupil being so disruptive that he is seriously preventing other pupils from learning.
- The pupil being uncontrollable and not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority.
- Parents/Guardians being unable or refusing to exercise their responsibility for the pupil.
- The pupil being a danger to himself or to others.
- When guarantees of reasonable behaviour following repeated suspensions are not forthcoming or not being met.
- The pupil's conduct acting as a source of serious bad example and having an adverse influence on other pupils in the school.

b) First time offences of a very serious nature. Such cases include but are not limited to:

- Serious assault.
- Trafficking in drugs
- Arriving in school under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Serious burglary or theft
- Causing major damage to school property
- Gross noncompliance towards the Principal or other staff members.
- Brandishing of a weapon.

In the interest of ensuring a fair and even-handed system for the imposition of an exclusion, the Board of Management will, among other things, take account of the following factors in determining an exclusion.

1. The age and state of health of the pupil.
2. The pupil's previous record of behaviour at the school.

3. Any mitigating circumstances unique to the pupil that might reasonably be taken into account in connection with the behaviour leading to the suspension.
4. The degree to which parental, peer or other pressure might have contributed to the behaviour.
5. The severity of the behaviour, its frequency and the likelihood of resources.
6. The extent to which the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the pupil and others in the school community.
7. The degree to which the behaviour was a breach of the Code of Behaviour.
8. Whether the incident leading to the suspension was the result of the pupil acting alone or as part of a group.
9. The degree to which the pupil recognises and accepts that his behaviour was unacceptable and is prepared to exhibit genuine contrition.

Exclusion Procedure

Except in exceptional circumstances, exclusion will only be resorted to after the Principal has:

- Ensured that all discipline options under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented.
- Ensured that all appropriate support personnel, both internal and external have been involved.
- Ensured all other procedures, referrals, supports have been exhausted.
- Ensured that discussion has occurred with the pupil and parents/guardians regarding specific misbehaviour that the school considers unacceptable and that may lead to permanent exclusion.
- Provided formal verbal and written warnings at appropriate times dealing with such behaviours and provided clear expectations of what was required of the pupil in the future.
- Recorded all action taken and copied all correspondence.
- Informed the parents/guardians of her intention to recommend exclusion to the B.O.M.
- Invited the parents/guardians to the B.O.M. hearing.
- Invited the parents/guardians to make a written submission in advance of the Board meeting.

- Provided in advance the parents/guardians with a full, written description of the allegations against the pupil and the case being made at the Board, together with copies of all documentation, statements, and other materials supporting that case.
- Made a formal recommendation to the Board with full supporting documentation. Following the actions by the Principal exclusion will still only occur after the B.O.M has:
 - Heard the Principal's case against the pupil, which should be made in the presence of the parents/guardians
 - Heard the response of the parents/guardians
 - Examined all the documentation
 - Considered the pupil's record in the school
 - Ensured that the Principal is not present for the Board's decision on the matter.
 - Discussed the case in detail
 - Considered all the commitments made in the Code of Behaviour.
 - Made a final decision to exclude.
 - Communicated the decision to exclude to the parents/guardians formally by registered letter.
 - Informed the Education Welfare Officer under Section 21 (1) of the Education Welfare Act 2000

The formal letter of notification will include:

- Notice of the exclusion
- Effective date of the exclusion
- Reasons for the exclusion
- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed of the exclusion.
- Information and documentation on Appeal rights.

Exclusions Appeal

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal a decision of the Board of Management to exclude a student to the Minister for Education or to an authority delegated for such appeals by the Minister under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998

Permanent exclusion may be appealed by a parent/guardian, by a student (over 18 years), or by the National Education Welfare Board. Any such appeal must be lodged within 42 calendar days of the decision of the Board of Management.

