

Code of Behaviour

SCOIL MHUIRE BANRÍON NA HÉIREANN

'INSPIRED BY THE SALESIAN WAY OF EDUCATING WE AIM TO CREATE A HAPPY, CARING, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT TOGETHER'

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy;
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school or taking a child out of school for a period during the day.
8. Transferring from one school to another. cf. Enrolment policy

The Code of Behaviour of *Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann* has been developed in accordance with *'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.*

POLICY FORMULATION

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- i. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
- ii. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal.
- iii. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
- iv. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way 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 and well being of all members of the school community
- To assist all school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour 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.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
- show respect for herself and others.
- respect differing personalities and cultures and be inclusive at all times.
- show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings.
- Speak with courtesy and respect
- attend school each day and not miss school without good reason.
- be punctual for school – be in the yard at 8.55am.
- request permission to leave school premises if necessary and be signed out by parent/guardian when leaving.
- wear the full school uniform
- abide by school policy on Uniform & Accessories and Mobile phones/Electronic games policies etc.
- have long hair neatly tied up while at school.
- do her best both in school and for homework. *Cf. homework policy*
- follow instructions given by any teacher or member of school staff.
- Follow classroom rules within the classroom.

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen – to the teacher and other pupils when they are speaking.
- work – to the best of her ability and have all necessary books for class each day.
- value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- follow – the direction of her teacher or teacher in charge of class and accept his/her authority, responsibility and right to teach and impose sanctions for any unacceptable behavior.
- obtain – her teachers permission to leave the classroom
- respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.
- obey the rules drawn up by her class
- keep her classroom clean ,tidy and litter free.
- do her work carefully and completely.
- get journal signed by parent/guardian daily.
- avoid distracting behaviour
- participate in all class activities
- share resources and equipment when necessary
- must remain seated and not wander to other places especially if teacher is speaking to someone at the door or during break times on wet days.
- on wet mornings must return to hall once school bag has been left outside classroom door.
- to organize her school bag so that she has all she needs for the day
- to bring a healthy lunch.

Playground Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Walk to play areas once the bell has rung
- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- stay - within the designated area for her own class
- avoid –going on the grass areas
- follow – the directions of the supervisors
- remain – on school grounds at all times
- obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break times
- respect – the supervisor and fellow pupils
- avoid – swearing, name calling, fighting and exclusion

Behaviour in other School Areas

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk – in the school corridors and move quietly around the school and avoid causing disturbance.
- ask – an adult to open the main entrance/exit school doors.
- request – parent/guardian to sign the release form if leaving the school.

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow –her teacher’s directions or those of the person in charge of group, at all times
- obey - bus rules and school tour rules. (cf. policies on school tours & bus rules)
- remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times

- behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- observe – the rules of general good behavior
- to have the relevant consent forms signed before going on any outing outside of the school.

Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year and at various stages throughout the year
- draw up a set of class rules in consultation with children in September and ensure these rules are displayed in the classroom.
- ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- ensure that all pupils have left the classroom /toilet areas at break /lunch /home times before going to staffroom or going home.
- ensure pupils walk when moving between classroom/hall/yard
- encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct in the class incident book. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded in the class incident book.
- report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal and to their parents.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school.

Parents/guardians can assist the school by

- showing support for teachers in their implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour
- encouraging their children to abide by the school rules,
- ensure punctuality and regular attendance at school each day,
- providing written explanations for any absences from school.
- ensuring that homework is given due time and effort and that school journal is checked and signed daily
- ensuring that their child has all the necessary classroom materials.
- promoting respect for teachers and all other school personnel
- ensure that their children have a positive attitude to and abide by the school and class rules
- supporting the authority of the school or teachers
- being available to discuss a problem concerning their child
- by taking responsibility and dealing promptly and effectively with cases where their child's behaviour is having a negative effect on others
- provide a contact number where you can be reached in an emergency
- cooperating with the school when the help of other professionals and agencies are sought.

- attending parent /teacher meetings and other relevant school meetings.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are encouraged to make an appointment to discuss these concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be requested and expected to participate in the intervention process.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

In keeping with Salesian ethos and our mission statement where we aim to create a happy, caring, learning environment, the school will endeavor to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.

A reward scheme for promoting positive behaviour will be used. Such rewards will include;

- Pupil of the day/week certs
- Positive note in school journal for parents
- Stickers/ stars for good behaviour
- Visit to another class teacher or Principal for praise and acknowledgement.
- Recognition at assembly
- Special privileges

The school encourages positive, child friendly initiatives eg mission week, colours days, class concerts etc.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Note: Children presenting with Special Educational Needs or Behavioral Disorders will be considered on an individual basis. Where necessary A Behavioural Management Plan will be drawn up in conjunction with parents, SESS and any other agency with which the child is involved. *Cf. Special Needs Policy*

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers - homework incomplete on a continual basis
- Running /shouting in the corridors.
- Telling lies
- Disturbing the work or play of others.
- Constantly playing in wrong area of yard
- Disrespectful tone / manner / questioning teacher or any staff member.
- Ignoring staff requests to follow school rules and requests made in the interest of the child's own safety, care and welfare.
- Refusing to comply with our school policies including our Mobile phone/Electronic games policy and Uniform & Accessories policy etc.

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. This list of examples is not exhaustive, it is not graded and the use of sanctions is based on the professional judgment of each teacher. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Reasoning with pupils, through explanation, discussion and advice on how to improve behavior .
- this to be done in a positive sensitive manner not in front of class.
- Verbal reprimand/reminder – quietly aside, in front of group/peers, in front of class.
- Written reprimand - note in school journal
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Prescribing additional work – weekend homework to be completed at home and signed by parents/guardians
- Loss of privileges - messages, class jobs, Friday treat,
- Referral to principal re class incident book – incident recorded by child herself.
- Parent contact
- Behaviour contract

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Circle Time or class meetings
- Fostering positive self esteem.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date in class incident book. This information would be useful should a problem persist.
- Principal follows up on class incident book entry - Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Temporary separation, if deemed necessary, going to the principal's office where the issue will be dealt with.
- A specific person – Principal /Resource teacher to do process work to prevent further violation or misbehaviour.

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property (eg. graffiti)
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity/unacceptable /inappropriate language
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward her teacher or any member of staff.
- Intentionally blaming /wronging someone else
- Possession or use of dangerous toys, sporting equipment or pets
- Possession or use of mobile/camera during school hours *cf. Mobile phone policy*

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- Principal's incident Book - continuous or serious incidences of misbehaviour are recorded by the children in Principal's incident book – once a child has recorded three incidences in one calendar month, Principal contacts parents and pupil will be asked to explain the nature of their misbehaviour.
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Loss of privileges - school tour
- Report submitted to the Board of Management if suspension is being considered
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour with work to be done at home re. their behaviour
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan.

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy/Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE). National Educational Support Services (NESS).
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).
- A specific person – Principal /Resource teacher to do process work to prevent further violation or misbehaviour

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Setting fires
- Graffiti on the school premises referring to any staff member / pupil / or their families
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to self, other children or staff.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin.
- Stealing
- Threats or threatening behaviour towards any staff member
- Bullying of such a serious nature which has required outside intervention but still persists.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 will/may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Suspension from school for one to three days:**

This response will/may occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. , The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension having informed the chairperson of Board of Management.

- **Suspension from school for longer than 3 days (four to ten days)**

This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

- **Expulsion:**

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an **'Immediate Suspension'** to the Principal Teacher. An **'Immediate Suspension'** may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an **'Automatic Suspension'** for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An **'Automatic Suspension'** may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An **'Immediate Suspension'** will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An **'Immediate Suspension'** may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An **'Automatic Suspension'** is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur **'Automatic Suspension'** as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- or
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

An **'Automatic Suspension'** may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion:

'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- i. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.

- ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond

b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ii. ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- iii. provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)

c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- i. as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- iv. the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose

d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer

- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the **twenty-day period** following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction:

The aim of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann Anti-Bullying policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop and implement procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

Statement on Bullying:

- Every person in the school is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.
- The school will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.
- The matter will be dealt with seriously.
- The school has a programme of support for both the bully and the bullied.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of incidents

Definition:

Bullying consists of **repeated** inappropriate behaviour whether by word, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person's right to personal dignity.

Types of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate:

- Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability etc.
- Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language.
- Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.
- Physical abuse or threatened abuse.
- Aggressive or obscene language.
- Offensive joke; whether spoken or by email, text messaging etc.
- Victimisation; including very personal remarks.
- Exclusion and isolation.
- Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions.
- Repeated unreasonable assignment to duties that are obviously unfavorable.
- Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.
- Threats, including demands for money.
- An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.

Indications of Bullying:

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:-

- anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, 'mitching', 'ditching';
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;

- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Strategies for Prevention of Bullying

- The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti bullying policy.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- Pupils encouraged and coached to use appropriate and direct language to counter bullying by 'Standing up for themselves eg. 'I don't like when you do that to me'and say 'NO' get away and tell someone..
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils in particular at weekly assembly sessions.
- Staff members are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- The school hosts 'Anti- Bullying' week during the first term.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
- Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.
- Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.

Maintaining awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour

Scoil Mhuire Banrion na hEireann will emphasise and reinforce the view that bullying behaviour is unacceptable by

- Using school assemblies to remind pupils of the school's anti bullying policy
- Using both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable... visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, cooperative games...
- Devising a school anti-bullying charter for display in classrooms and other prominent locations
- Anti- Bullying Posters located around the school

Supervision

Insofar as is reasonably practicable school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as morning yard time, play time and dismissal time.

Disclosure:

Children will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying. They will also be taught the difference between 'telling tales' and asking for help.

Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:

- I. All incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the school.
- II. Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly.
- III. A calm unemotional problem solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- IV. Incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher. Incidents that are of a serious nature or those that involve pupils from a number of classes will be referred to the Principal.
- V. On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- VI. An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s). If the bullying involves a group of pupils members of that group will first be met individually and then as a whole. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to resolve the difficulty and to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- VII. If on the conclusion of the preliminary investigation the teacher is convinced that bullying has occurred the Principal will be informed and parent(s)/guardian(s) of all concerned will be contacted.
- VIII. Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilised.
- IX. Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying Behaviour.

NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence;

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified in writing by letter / using the school journal
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.
- Should a parent/guardian wish to take a pupil from school during the school day they must 'sign out' in the School Release Form in the pupils classroom.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register

RECORDS

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's Behaviour. Such records will contain;

- Incidents of misbehaviour,
- Processes/interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or referral to other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed, and the reasons they were imposed

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

POLICY RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Banríon na hEireann at its meeting held on 24th March 2010 – amended February 2013

Signed: *Oliver Shinnery*

Oliver Shinnery, Chairperson, Board of Management

PATRON'S APPROVAL

This policy has been approved by St. Senan's Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron .