

Code of Behaviour

SLIABH A'MHADRA NATIONAL SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of Sliabh A 'Mhadra N.S. has audited the existing code and prepared and made available a revised 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; and
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S.. 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;

The staff of the school carried out an audit of the existing Code of Behaviour and prioritised areas for development and the deputy principal compiled an initial draft.

- 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 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.

GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR IN THE SCHOOL

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this code is **respect** - respect for ourselves and others; our own and others' property and the environment.

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

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults;
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings;
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules" (Appendix 1) each class may draft their own class rules or goals, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy.

However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity.

Senior students have a role to play and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during all school related activities.

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 the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- abide by all school rules
- wear school uniform
- keep the school and grounds clean and litter free
- do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- participate in school activities
- be courteous and stand back to allow teachers or other adults to enter door
- line up in an orderly manner in the morning and after each break

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
- work – to the best of his/her ability
- raise – your hand if you wish to speak
- value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- follow – the direction of his/her teacher
- obtain – his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom
- respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.
Children should greet visitor, stop work and listen attentively

Playground (Playing Pitch) Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- follow – the directions of the teacher on duty
- remain – in designated areas and on school grounds at all times. Children will remain in their classroom on wet days engaging in activities or games
- obtain – permission before re-entering the classroom during break periods
- respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- play fairly and include others

- avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling (this list is not exhaustive)
- stop – ball play when adult is walking through area

Behaviour in other School Areas

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk quietly in the school corridor and hallways
- be respectful to other adults and students by standing back to allow them to pass
- follow all safety rules and fire drills

Behaviour before and after school

Each pupil is expected to:

- enter school premises in an orderly manner
- no ball games or running
- at home time children line up for their respective buses
- Children walking home should remain on school grounds until buses have left and the road is clear. While safe walking is encouraged the school shall not be held responsible for walking accidents on the road.
- children cycling to school should do so in a safe and responsible way. They should not leave the bicycle shelter area until buses have left the school and the road is clear. While safe cycling is encouraged the school shall not be held responsible for cycling accidents on the road.

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow – his/her teacher's directions at all times
- 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 behaviour
- abide by the school's Code of Behaviour and observe normal school rules.

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:

- Create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their pupils
- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year and as need arises thereafter.
- Ensure the classroom rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.

- Keep a written record of all incidents in their incident book of continued, serious or gross misconduct. 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.
- Report repeated instances of misbehaviour to the Principal.

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 encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

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

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

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

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

Teachers may use various strategies to promote good behaviour including-

- Involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules
- The direct teaching of the code to the pupils in the classroom
- Reinforcement of the values underpinning the code during R.E. and S.P.H.E.
- The recognition by the teacher of good and improved behaviour
- star/reward charts, stickers, homework passes, weekly lottery/raffle, lucky dip, group competition,
- extra responsibilities in class and in the school,
- singling out for exceptional worthwhile achievements and efforts,
- other incidental means of praise or reward.
- Good deeds recorded in Good Deed Folder in class.
Also record good deeds in School Good Deed folder.
- Friendship Week
- Buddies System on playground
- To facilitate new members of staff become familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September.
- A copy of the code will be available to both parent and teachers in the school office.
- The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The following strategies may be used by teachers:

Praise

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

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

Disapproval

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and to discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to the age and emotional development of the child.

The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour – they are not always followed in the format listed.

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or on the yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Carrying out a useful task within the school;
- Reflection sheet (kept on file by teacher);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians;

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.

Level One – both in classrooms and the yard

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- not completing homework without good reason
- Interrupting class work
- Talking out of turn
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests

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. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s) by class teacher including advice on how to improve
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Child's name recorded – nature of the incident noted. If it occurred in the yard, it is recorded in the Yard Incident Book by the teacher on duty.
- Note sent home informing parents / guardians
- Prescribing additional work (senior classes)
- Loss of privileges .
- Temporary separation from peers - Time out
- Extra work
- Writing of explanation or apology
- Pupil asked to speak with Principal or Deputy Principal
- Use of behaviour contracts
- Detention during playtime

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Open Circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

Level Two – both in classrooms and in the yard

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
- Telling lies
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)

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 may be administered by the Principal, and may include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation, depending on the severity of the misbehaviour.

Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention – 15 minutes at lunch time, worksheets to be completed about the misdemeanour and how behaviour can be improved and parents/guardians notified. Detention only applies from 1st class – 6th class.
- The Principal is consulted and meets with the pupil
- Report may be submitted to the Board of Management
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

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
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 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 five days:**

This response will 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.

- **Suspension from school for five 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

These procedures are drafted in accordance with the following chapters in Developing a code of Behaviour- Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

- Ch. 10 - Suspensions and expulsions
- Ch. 11 - Suspensions
- Ch. 12 - Expulsion

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 Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S. 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 Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S. 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;

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- 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 Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S. acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is 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.

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 Sliabh a'mhadra N.S. 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);

- i. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- 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 before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S.. acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- ii. 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.
- iii. 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 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide 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);

- iii. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- iv. 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 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Sliabh A' Mhadra N.S. 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 the Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S. Anti-Bullying policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
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- 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 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.

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.

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- 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.
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.

- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- 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

Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. 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...

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 assembly 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:

- All incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the school.
- Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly.
- A calm unemotional problem solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilised.
- 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 cause by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

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,
- 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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management's Responsibilities

The Board of Management is expected to

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment;
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code;
- Ratify the code;
- Ensure the code is communicated to the whole school community.

Principal's Responsibilities

The Principal is expected to

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for review of the Code, as outlined in the timetable for review.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Teachers are expected to:

- Teach the code;
- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour having regard to decisions made on a whole school basis;
- Be cognisant of their duty of care;
- Create a safe and welcoming working environment for each pupil;
- Develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil;
- Praise desirable behaviour;
- Facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential;
- Listen, at appropriate times, to pupils' explanations for behaviour;
- Recognise and affirm good work;
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils;
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils;
- Be courteous, consistent and fair;
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum;
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour;
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour;
- Provide support for colleagues;
- Communicate with parents when necessary and
- Provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities
- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school and class rules.

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are expected to

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for their own and other people's property
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate to the school the reasons for children's absences
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES

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

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Tours
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs

SUCCESS CRITERIA

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

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

Implementation Date

REVIEW

The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.

POLICY RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Sliabh A'Mhadra N.S. at its meeting held on

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1

Rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community

General Rules

- Be on time and fully prepared for school
- Be respectful and courteous to teachers, fellow pupils and visitors
- Take care of younger children
- Have respect for school books, furniture, equipment and other people's property
- Correct uniform to be worn at all times
- Healthy eating policy in practice here
- All books, garments lunch boxes etc must be clearly labeled
- Written notes must be supplied for any absence
- Pupils may not leave school early unless collected by a parent/guardian
- Mobile phones, gameboys etc are not allowed in school
- Children must stay in designated play areas and must not leave school grounds in search of ball etc. - permission must be sought
- No re-entering the classroom during breaks without permission
- Pupils are not allowed to run in classrooms or play in hallways or toilet areas
- Rough play, fighting, bullying, foul or abusive language will not be tolerated
- When bell rings – All play must stop, line up properly and quietly
- On wet days pupils will remain in classroom and play with games provided in an orderly way

Classroom rules - *suggestions*

- Always seek permission before leaving your seat, speaking out etc.
- Raise your hand and wait for attention
- Be silent and listen to person speaking
- Always try your best