



Code of Behaviour and Discipline

Introduction and Rationale

Scoil Na Mainistreach seeks to provide a broad and balanced education in an atmosphere of mutual respect, with an appreciation of the individual needs of pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community. Where there is an atmosphere of respect – there is an environment in which children can develop a positive attitude to themselves and the world in which they live in. The Code of Behaviour and Discipline for Scoil Na Mainistreach has been developed and reviewed following a process of consultation between the Board of Management, teachers and parents with adherence to our legal obligations as set out in the Education Welfare Act (2000) and best practice as set out in ‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools’ (NEWB 2008). The Code is informed by the principles of fairness and respect, and it ensures a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel. Parents/Guardians must co-operate with and support the implementation of the Code and are required to sign a certificate of cooperation with the Code of Behaviour when enrolling their child in the school.

Values and Aims of the Code

Scoil Na Mainistreach is a Roman Catholic school with a strong Catholic Ethos that values the full and harmonious development of all aspects of our pupils, in an environment that promotes mutual respect, safety, dignity and fairness.

Scoil Na Mainistreach’s Code of Behaviour and Discipline has been developed to ensure the smooth running of the school and to provide a safe, secure and harmonious environment for pupils, teachers, ancillary staff and parents.

It is designed to promote a friendly, happy atmosphere which will allow each and every child to maximise their true potential while engaging in respect, tolerance and consideration for others.

It aims to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

In Scoil Na Mainistreach great emphasis is placed on setting high expectations and affirming good behaviour. Our school motto, which graces the school crest, notes, ‘Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh sí’. This means ‘praise the young and they will respond accordingly’. Teachers **may** adopt some of the strategies listed below to this end.

- Words of praise or congratulations from the class teacher and/or principal in class, in a larger group or over the intercom.

- Stamps, record charts or point systems which build up over time to earning the student a reward.
- Yard Trophy for the best class at lining up after break-time.
- Small reward from the teachers for good behaviour anywhere in the school building.
- Pupil of the week/month award, trophy or certificate for good behaviour.
- Extra privileges or responsibilities.
- End of year certificates, awards etc.
- Celebration of achievements at whole school level in school assemblies.
- Positive written or verbal communication with parents.
- Development of behaviour plans or contracts to address specific targets.
- Delivery and promotion of the SPHE Curriculum to assist in developing positive relationships throughout the school.
- Acknowledgement of positive classroom behaviour through the use of incentive/reward strategies (Class Dojo, Golden Time etc.)
- The use of the phrase **Kind Hands and Kind Words** is being encouraged as a means of promoting positive behaviour in the school yards.

General School Behaviour

Scoil Na Mainistreach aims to create and nurture a positive culture for teaching and learning by creating a caring, structured environment with high standards of behaviour. Thus, the following guidelines for the whole school, classroom and yard will be adhered to by all.

- Bullying, or being party to bullying, will not be tolerated under any circumstance and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. Scoil Na Mainistreach and its yards and fields are 'Bully Free Zones'. **(See Anti-Bullying Policy)**
- Students will enter the school in the morning and leave in the evening by their respective yards in a respectful manner; walking and showing courtesy to others.
- The school day begins at 9:00am and children should arrive to school on time. The school gates open at 8:50 to allow for punctual arrival to school. All children proceed to their yard where they line up with their classmates
- All visitors to the school, hall and classrooms will be shown respect and pleasant behaviour.
- School property within the classroom, toilets, corridors and environs will be treated with respect by each and every pupil.
- Pupils must be respectful of all staff in the school building and in its environs.
- Mobile phones are not allowed in school without a written note from the parent. Then; the phone must be labelled, bagged and handed into the office to be returned to the student at home-time. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone will have the item confiscated and the phone will be confined to the office. It can be returned to the parent of the pupil at an arranged time. **(See Mobile Phone Policy)**
- Cycling, using a scooter or skateboard in the school grounds is strictly prohibited.
- Scoil Na Mainistreach's buildings, grounds, yards and fields are deemed '**Litter Free**' and will be maintained by pupils in this fashion.
- Children should obey strict instructions when taking part in a fire drill.

Expectations in the Classroom

- Students will treat each other with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Pupils will co-operate fully with instructions given by the teacher, SNA or substitute teacher.
- Children will complete, to the best of their ability, oral or written work assigned to them in school and for homework. **(See Homework Policy)**
- The school journals will be signed nightly by the parents to show they are aware of, and supporting, completed homework. Sick notes may be facilitated in this journal. Simple communications with teacher/parent and vice versa will be undertaken in the journal. Communication can also be made through email or can also be done via the Aladdin connect app.
- Children will take pride in their appearance; wear the proper school uniform every day and P.E. track-suit on respective P.E. days.
- Stud earrings are only allowed.
- Students will keep their own desk area and their classroom and toilet area neat and tidy at all times.
- School books and copies should be kept in a neat fashion. Graffiti on covers and pages will not be allowed.
- Students will respect the property of their teacher and peers.
- Scoil Na Mainistreach encourages a 'Healthy School Lunch' policy. We encourage no crisps, fizzy drinks or sweets in the lunch box. **(See Healthy Eating Policy)**
- On wet days when the children cannot go to the yard they will remain in their classroom where they will be supervised by the supervision staff.
- Children may take part in wet day activities (watch a cartoon/movie, play board games, Lego etc)

Expectations in the Yard

Scoil Na Mainistreach is very lucky to have plenty of yard space and a large field for break-times. The vast majority of children have a very positive experience of yard time. In Scoil Na Mainistreach children are reminded to have **Kind Hands and Kind Words**.

The following points will further help to keep all children safe during break-time.

- Children must remain inside the designated area of the yard during break times.
- Benches are there to facilitate quiet time, chat, reading or card games. They are not to be used or incorporated into chasing games.
- Buddy Benches are available for the promotion of relationship building in conjunction with the SPHE programme.
- Balls are allowed to be used on the yard. Use of balls will be allowed at the discretion of the teacher.
- Food of any sort should not be brought onto the yard except in exceptional circumstances. In these instances, children should follow the directions of the supervising adult.
- All classes are expected to line up in an orderly fashion at the end of break time.

- On hearing the bell signifying the end of the break, all pupils should freeze.
- Teacher blows a whistle and the children walk quietly to their respective line and remain here in silence while the yard teacher gives points for the best line. These points will add up to various classes winning 'the yard trophy' resulting in a small reward.
- Upon being collected by their class teacher the children should walk in an orderly fashion to their own classroom.
- All pupils are advised to use the toilet **before** going on yard. If a pupil, for whatever reason, needs to leave the yard, they **must** seek permission from the yard teacher. They should notify the yard teacher on their return to the yard.
- Dangerous games or rough boisterous behaviour involving physical contact are not allowed under any circumstances. Where a pupil's behaviour on the yard compromises the welling or health and safety of other pupils and/or staff, that pupil may be removed from the yard for a specified period of time and may face further sanctions. In extreme circumstances, parents may be required to supervise their child during break times.

Pupils with Additional Educational Needs

While all pupils in the school are subject to the school's Code of Behaviour, some pupils come to school with additional educational needs. All staff members at Scoil Na Mainistreach have an appreciation and awareness of these complex and individual needs. These needs are taken into account during the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. Where a pupil with additional educational needs is in breach of the schools Code of Behaviour, the teachers will use their professional judgment in relation to the regularity and level of sanctions. Parents of these pupils will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the pupil to improve his/her behaviour. These strategies will be included in their Continuum of Support Plan. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.

Procedures for Dealing with Misbehaviour

The following strategies **may** be used to address misbehaviour.

Junior Level:

- Visual cues towards positive behaviour
- Visual cues towards problem solving
- Proximal praise of positive behaviour
- Verbal warning from the teacher.
- Child takes 'time out' to reflect.
- Teacher communicates with parents.
- Implementation of a behaviour plan.
- Deputy Principal or Principal speaks to child.
- Child loses privilege of 'Golden Time' on Friday afternoon.
- Principal formally communicates with parents.

- A meeting with teacher/Principal and parents arranged.

Middle/Senior Level:

The following strategies co-exist with the listing/booking system.

- Teacher and pupil discuss the incident.
- Teacher communicates informally with parents via the homework journal and/or email/Aladdin.
- Principal and pupil discuss the incident.
- A behavioural contract can be initiated between pupil, parent and school. Guidelines are set and a given time stated in which behaviour should be seen to improve.
- If the outcome of the behavioural contract still proves unsatisfactory, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management. The parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal.
- If the outcome of this meeting is unsuccessful then the Board may suspend the child.
- In the case of serious misbehaviour/dangerous, aggressive, unacceptable behaviour of a pupil towards another pupil or member of staff the Principal can automatically bypass this procedure and ask the Chairperson of the Board to suspend the child.
- In accordance with the schools' Code of Behaviour, the Anti Bullying Policy will be enforced in this school. The working ethos of this school is based upon mutual respect and as a result, it is expected that the student body will give respect to all those with whom they come in contact.

Formal Procedures for Dealing with Misbehaviour

In conjunction with the reward system for positive behaviour, Scoil Na Mainistreach operates a Listing System to address misbehaviour. This system operates for pupils in 1st to 6th class. The procedures are as follows:

- When listed, the child's name is listed in a folder which follows the child throughout his school life.
- The listing, describing the child's behaviour, is recorded and numbered in the homework journal.
- Parents/guardians are required to acknowledge the listing in the student's journal.
- In general, the accumulation of four consecutive listings results in a booking.
- On receipt of listing No. 4 in a four week period, Booking No. 1 will be issued at the same time.
- Booking Form No. 1. This will detail the breaches of the school discipline code. Principal signs booking form, student writes apology which is signed by the parents/guardians.
- Booking Form No. 2. This is similar and at this point a behaviour plan should be implemented to assist the pupil in addressing their behaviour.
- Booking Form No. 3. Parents are invited to meet with the Principal and are advised that the child is at stage 3 of Code of Discipline Sanction.
- Booking Form No. 4. At this stage, the Principal, with the sanction of the Board of Management, will impose a suspension of up to three days. On the pupil's return to

school, a behavioural contract can be initiated between pupil, parent and school, at the discretion of the Principal. Guidelines will be given and a time stated in which behaviour should be seen to improve.

If a child goes beyond a 4th booking further sanctions will be at the discretion of the Principal.

It is important to note that The Principal, or any teacher, can skip any level of listing or booking according to the seriousness of the misbehaviour.

Suspension

Suspension is defined as 'requiring a student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days' (NEWB Guidelines, 2008).

Asking a parent/guardian to keep a child from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension. Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a child has engaged in a serious or gross misbehaviour. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, a single instance of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

- The seriously detrimental effect on the Education of other pupils as a result of the pupil's behaviour to date.
- Whether the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to health and safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

The purpose of the suspension is to give the child/parent/guardian/staff time to consider the child's actions and to consider the implications for the other pupils in the class group. It will also provide the school with time to devise ways to help the pupil to improve their behaviour in the future.

The Principal can suspend a child from **any class grouping** for periods of up to three days. If a longer suspension is proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB Guidelines.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority will be exercised in line with the procedures as outlined in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools' (NEWB 2008).

Appeals

Under section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents/guardians are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some of the decisions of the Board of Management, including suspension and expulsion.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have their child reinstated to Scoil Na Mainistreach. The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will hold no safety risks to other children or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of an Individual Behaviour Plan for the child in conjunction with the Class Teacher and Support Teacher if required. The Principal will formally re-admit the child to their class.

Procedures for Notifying the School of a Child's Absence

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000) s.18, parents shall notify the school of the reasons for a child's absence. The school is obliged by law to record and compile data on the attendance of all pupils enrolled in the school. Compulsory reports are made to the relevant Child Welfare Agency (Tusla) for all pupils that are absent for 20 days or more in a school year. It is essential that the school can provide accurate data in these reports on the reasons for any absences. Failure to provide accurate details on absences will result in said absences being reported as 'unexplained'.

The following procedures can be used to facilitate the notification of absences:

- Use of the Aladdin Connect App on day of absence.
- Email to class teacher on day of absence.
- Written note in journal on day of return.
- Email to school on day of absence.

Implementation

This policy was reviewed and was ratified by the Board of Management. This policy will be reviewed again in 2024.

Signed: Martina Murphy.

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: 

(Principal)

Date: 19.6.23

Date: 19/6/23

Date of next review: June 2024.

