



Scoil Bhríde Midleton

Code of Behaviour

00512D

1. Introduction

Scoil Bhríde's Code of Behaviour has been developing over the last number of years. This is in keeping with the requirements of the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) and follows the guidelines of its publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" (2008). As part of the drafting process, discussions took place at staff level, at class level, discussions by the principal with pupil representatives and with parent representatives as well as discussions at Board of Management meetings.

2. Scoil Bhríde Vision for Relationships and Behaviour in the School.

- I. In Scoil Bhríde's Mission Statement, we commit ourselves to affording the pupils the best opportunity possible to avail of an all-rounded education, suitable to the ability of each child and in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. This Code of Behaviour aims to provide a framework to promote positive constructive behaviour so that this mission is achieved.
- II. We commit ourselves to the under privileged.
- III. We aim for a work environment that will be safe and characterised by fair treatment, team work, personal accountability and opportunity to contribute, learn and grow. Teachers and parents are partners in the children's education. Co-operation and communication between home and school are vital ingredients in the educational process. We share the same aim, the well being of the children in our care.
- IV. The whole school community which consists of parents, pupils, principal, teaching staff, special needs assistants, secretary, caretaker, ancillary staff and bus escorts have a role to play in creating a respectful, secure, inclusive environment. We want all to feel respected, safe, fairly treated, listened to and involved.
- V. The motto of Scoil Bhríde is "Ní neart go cur le chéile". This means it is only by working together that we will be strong - there is no strength without unity.
- VI. We as a school community will respect pupils from different backgrounds, countries and cultures.

- VII. While Scoil Bhríde is a school with a Catholic Ethos pupils from different religious or no religious denomination(s) are welcomed and cherished.
- VIII. When expectations are high it helps to develop a heightened sense of responsibility and self discipline among the whole school community.
- IX. We expect all students to behave to the best of their ability.

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has necessitated that the Code of Behaviour be updated in compliance with the requirements of NPHET, DES and HSE guidance on protection from coronavirus (Covid-19).

St. Brigid's Presentation Primary School has deemed it necessary to review and update its Code of Behaviour to ensure compliance with the following legislation and guidelines:

- Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013
- Children First National Guidance 2015
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
- Data Protection 1998 -2018 and EU General Data Personal Regulation 2018 (GDPR)
- Department of Education Roadmap for the full return to school
- HSE / HPSC Covid-19 'Interim Recommendations for the re-opening of schools and educational facilities'

3. Expectations for pupils, staff and parents and how they will treat each other.

3.1 Pupils

Pupils can expect to:

- be treated fairly, consistently and with respect;
- feel safe, respected and secure;
- learn in a well-maintained physical environment relatively free from disruption;
- be listened to and participate in decision making which affects their own work
- have their individual differences recognised and acknowledged when and if possible;
- have positive behaviour reaffirmed;
- have misbehaviour dealt with appropriately.

Pupils are **expected** to:

- attend school regularly and punctually;
- wear a neat school uniform;
- work quietly and safely to the best of their ability at all times;
- respect the right of other pupils to learn;
- show respect for all members of the school community;
- respect school property, the property of others and their own belongings;

- keep the school environment clean and tidy;
- have the correct books and materials in school;
- follow class rules;
- move quietly and carefully around the school;
- line up in an orderly manner before and after break;
- stay on the premises and within designated areas during school times;
- do their homework to the best of their ability.

3.2 Staff

Staff can expect to

- be treated with respect
- teach in a well-maintained physical environment relatively free from disruption;
- get support and co-operation from colleagues and parents to achieve the school's aims and objectives;
- be listened to and participate in decision making which affects their own work and that of the school in general;
- work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development;
- get support and professional advice from the Board of Management, Department of Education and Skills, the national Education Welfare Board, the National Council for Special Education and the National Educational Psychological Services to help to cater for the psychological, emotional and physical needs of their pupils;
- have grievances dealt with according to agreed procedures as set out in the CPSMA handbook. (see appendix1)

Staff are **expected** to:

- support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour;
- be cognisant of their duty of care;
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their pupils;
- develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil;
- praise desirable behaviour;
- facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential;
- recognise and provide for individual differences as far as is reasonable;
- be courteous, consistent and fair;
- keep opportunities for disruption to a minimum;
- keep record of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour;
- provide support for colleagues.
- maintain an open, two-way communication with parents through email, by phone or by letter and meetings can be arranged when necessary.

3.3 Parents

Parents can expect to:

- be treated with respect;

- have a safe and welcoming environment for their child;
- obtain recognition for individual differences among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available;
- have fair and consistent procedures applied to the school's dealings with pupils;
- receive progress reports in accordance with agreed school policy (P.T. meetings and end of year reports)
- receive information on school's policies and procedures.

Parents are **expected** to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly and on time and that they are collected from school on time;
- encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour;
- ensure their children wear the school uniform;
- ensure their children have the correct books and materials;
- have their children's belongings labelled;
- read written and electronic communication received from the school and respond appropriately;
- report to the office if calling to the school during the day for any reason;
- notify the school via Aladdin Connect/Phone call/ email prior to calling to the school during the day, for any reason
- treat all members of the school community with respect;
- notify the school via Aladdin Connect/Phone call/ email or letter for all absenteeism;
- inform class teacher of any change to collection procedure for their children;
- help their children to learn and practise good behaviour and to have a positive attitude towards themselves, other people and towards the school;
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others;
- communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour;
- attend meetings at the school if requested;
- help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed.

***COVID-19* Addendum:**

During the current COVID-19 crisis, we all have a responsibility to keep each other safe and well. In order to do so, we have high expectations of our students to follow the rules and guidelines of the school related to;

- Following any altered routines for arrival or departure
- Following school instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing, sanitizing and provision of personal hand towel.
- Following guidance regarding pods and bubbles in the classroom and at play time.
- Moving around the school and school grounds following specific instructions (for example, maintaining social distancing, queuing while waiting for doors to open at 8.20 a.m. etc)
- Expectations about hygiene etiquette around sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal of same.
- Telling an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19

- No sharing of any equipment or personal items.
- Amended expectations about break and play time, including where children play, queue and follow correct designated routes to and from the buildings.

Parents are expected to:

- Observe and respect all social distancing protocols when dropping off or collecting their children from the school
- Encourage their child to adhere to social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene guidelines.
- Monitor their child closely for signs and symptoms of illness and keep child at home if they show any signs of infectious illness. Please refer to the HSE document: Protecting your child from COVID-19 - HSE.ie Ensure that meetings with school are arranged in advance through school office, via Aladdin Connect or email.
- Ensure that school has up to date contact information for parents/guardians and other family members who may be required to collect their child, should symptoms appear during the school day
- Answer telephone call from school/call school back promptly and have arrangements in place for prompt collection of their child should it be required

4 School Rules

To achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the following rules.

4.1 Respect and Courtesy

All pupils are expected to treat staff and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy. Inappropriate behaviour i.e. rough play, bad language, fighting, personal remarks, pushing, kicking, and spitting will not be tolerated.

School property and the property of others should be respected.

4.2 Dress Code

Pupils are required to wear the **complete** uniform every day except on the designated P.E. day.

Girls: Navy pinafore /skirt/ tailored trousers, (leggings are not allowed) red shirt (not polo shirt), navy cardigan/jumper and navy tie. Navy tights/stockings only and dark shoes black or navy.

Boys: Grey trousers, red shirt, navy jumper and navy tie.

The school track suit is worn on P.E. days.

P.E. Requirements: School tracksuit, red polo shirt and runners.

- Inappropriate footwear, i.e., Uggs, shoes with high heels

- Jewellery: long or hooped earrings, nose or facial piercings and expensive jewellery are not allowed due to the inherited safety issues that will arise during day-to-day school activities.
- Hairstyles to be neat and tidy and not impede schoolwork.
- School Shorts will be the only shorts allowed during periods of warm weather.
- Regular uniform inspections will be made.

4.3 Healthy Lunches

Healthy lunches enable a child to work more efficiently i.e., sandwiches, fruit and yogurt. Cans, glass bottles sweets and bars are discouraged.

- Crisps, fizzy drinks and chewing gum are not allowed.
- It has come to our attention that a number of children have an allergic reaction, of varying degrees, to peanuts/nuts. A severe allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock) can occur through ingestion of peanut/nut products, cross contamination and breathing peanuts in the air. Since this condition can be life threatening, we are asking for your help in minimising the risk to these children by creating a nut free environment in Scoil Bhríde.
- Food must be eaten in the classroom. All wrappers and left over food must be taken home.

4.4 Homework

- Homework is expected to be well done, clean and neat.
- Checking and signing by parents/guardians daily is recommended.
- Incomplete homework must be explained in writing by a parent/guardian.

4.5 Attendance

- Each child is expected to be in school at 8.40 a.m., when the bell rings and children need to be collected promptly at home time.
- A notification via Aladdin Connect/ email/phone call or letter is expected to explain all absences.
- Pupils leaving school early must be signed out by parent/guardian.
- A failure to attend school regularly may be dealt with in accordance with the Scoil Bhríde Midleton Attendance Policy, using procedures below.
- A continued failure to come to school on time may be dealt with in accordance with the Scoil Bhríde Midleton Attendance Policy, using procedures below.

4.6 Movement throughout the school/ school grounds

- Entering and leaving the school must be done in an orderly manner.
- Pupils are asked to walk on the right-hand side of the corridor/stairs.
- Pupils are asked to use the handrail on stairs.
- Pupils are asked to stand back and allow adults to pass.

- Running is strictly forbidden in classrooms and on corridors.
- Pupils who use bicycles are asked to alight at the school gate.

4.7 Break-times

- Staff who are supervising classroom/corridor/yard are to be always obeyed.
- No re-entering the school building during the breaks without permission of teacher/ or staff member
- When the bell rings to signal the end of break-time, pupils are to line up quietly and stand in an orderly manner until instructed to return to their classroom.
- During inclement weather pupils remain indoors in their classrooms and may play with the games provided.

4.8 Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

- Mobile phones and electronic devices must be turned off before entering the school grounds.
- Phones/devices are given to the class teacher or special education teacher in the morning or later in the day as the need arises (pupils attending learning support in the afternoon).
- The phones/devices are locked away during the school day. Teachers take no responsibility for damage to or theft of mobile phones.
- It is the responsibility of the pupil to retrieve her phone/electronic device at home time and to place it in her bag before leaving the building.

To view the complete Scoil Bhríde Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy, please see the school website www.scoilbhridemidleton.ie

4.9 Health and Safety

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked that teachers be made aware of any special needs which a child may have.
- Parent(s)/guardians(s) are asked to make an appointment for parent/teacher meetings.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to please check your child's hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice and treat if necessary.
- Jewellery: long or hooped earrings, nose or facial piercings and expensive jewellery are not allowed. This is due to the potential harm for students partaking in school activities in class, yard or during PE lessons.
- Pupils are not allowed to bring alcohol, cigarettes, vaps or other illegal substances on to school premises or school organised trips/events.
- Requests to remain indoors during break times must be made in writing and signed by parent/guardian.
- All parents/guardians and visitors are required to report to the office.
- Children who are ill should not be in school.

5. System for acknowledging good behaviour, progress and effort.

Good behaviour is praised in a number of ways.

For Individuals, good behaviour may be acknowledged as follows:

- i. A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- ii. A word of praise in front of group/class
- iii. A mention to the principal;
- iv. A comment/smiley/sticker in the exercise book;
- v. A mention to parents (verbal or written);
- vi. A treat e.g., if terms of a behaviour contract are fulfilled.

Group/Class

- vii. A Group/Class treat such as:
 - ❖ Reduction in homework
 - ❖ Edible treat
 - ❖ DVD
 - ❖ Time given to preferred activity
 - ❖ Extra playtime
- viii. For groups within a class a system of merit marks
- ix. A mention to the principal
- x. A mention to parents
- xi. Announcement by principal over intercom

6. Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile phones to school
- Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum
- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning

- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious Damage to property
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or vaps

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

- PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g., appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. "Cyber/text" bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.

In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.

7. Sanctions

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

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the Scoil Bhríde Midleton Code of Behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break or after school
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually, sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

8. Suspension and Expulsion

Please note that all procedures for suspensions or expulsions will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines published by the NEWB, "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" (2008). Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed, and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the *Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000*.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the *Education Welfare Act*.

8.1 Procedures in respect of suspension

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

1. inform the student and their parents about the complaint and give parents and student an opportunity to respond.

Inform the student and parents

Let the student and their parents know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension.

Parents may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents in writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal

and permanent record of having let parents know. It also ensures that parents are clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Give an opportunity to respond

Parents and student should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

A meeting with the student and their parents provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to plan to respond to the negative behaviour. The school should record the invitations made to parents and their response.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

8.2 The period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than

three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. Each Board of Management should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than three days might be approved.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions. The Board of Management should normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

The Board should formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* (see **8.3 Appeals**).

These provisions enable school authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

8.3 Appeals

The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management, an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the

Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and should be given information about how to appeal.

If the student is attending a school under the management of a VEC, the appeal must be made in the first instance to the VEC. Where an appeal to the VEC is concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

8.4 Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal should notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

1. the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
2. the reasons for the suspension.
3. any study programme to be followed.
4. the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
5. the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
6. the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

The letter should be clear and easy to understand. Particular care should be taken in communicating with parents who may have reading difficulties, or whose first language is not the language of the school.

Engaging with student and parents

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the student to behave well when the student returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

8.5 Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the

suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

8.6 After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The school should have a plan to help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. This plan will help to avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifies a cycle of academic failure. Successful re-integration goes beyond academic work. A suspended student may feel angry or resentful about their suspension, and these feelings can trigger problems with reintegration which, in turn, may lead to further problem behaviour. Where possible, the school should arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Clean slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school should expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

8.7 Records and Reports

Records of investigation and decision making:

Formal written records should be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The Principal should report all suspensions to the Board of

Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

8.8 Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management should review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

9. Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be considered at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

Scoil Bhríde Midleton have completed the Mason, Hayes and Curran Critical Behaviour Training Module in March 2023. Agreed templates for behaviour planning and recording of critical behaviour were adopted by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Midleton in June 2023. These plans are in place to allow the staff and Board of Scoil Bhríde Midleton to use the Code of Conduct if/when the need arises for these pupils.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

10. Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)

- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Newsletters/school website/e-mails
- Aladdin or SeeSaw notification service.

11. Expulsions

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management decides to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*. As part of the code of behaviour, the Board of Management should ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedures for, expulsion which are in line with these Guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

11.1 Authority to expel

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour.

11.2 The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

1. meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
 2. making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
 3. ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
 4. seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g., 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).
1. A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:
 - the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
 - the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
 - the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a

series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

'Automatic' expulsion

A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

1. a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
2. actual violence or physical assault
3. supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
4. sexual assault.

11.3 Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management should undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

1. What is the precise description of the behaviour?
2. How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
3. Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

1. What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g., in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
2. What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g., bullying, cultural or family factors)?
3. Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g., home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

1. How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
2. What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

1. What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
2. How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
3. What has been the result of these interventions?
4. Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
5. Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
6. Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
7. Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g., Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
8. Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

1. Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
2. Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

1. To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
2. Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
3. In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

Inappropriate use of expulsion

Expulsion should not be proposed for:

5. poor academic performance
6. poor attendance or lateness
7. minor breaches of the code of behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

11.4 Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

It is a matter for each Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

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

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal should:

1. inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
2. give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness

with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Parents and the student must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents is essential. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.

If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should:

1. inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
2. ensure that parents 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
3. provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
4. notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing • advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
5. ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)*). The Board of Management should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)*).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, s4A*).

The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

1. make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
2. convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, section 24).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities.

In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained, and that the safety of students is secured (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood 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 students or staff.

Step 6: 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 should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

11.5 Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational

Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

If the student is attending a school established or maintained by a VEC, the appeal must be made in the first instance to the VEC. Where an appeal to the VEC has been concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

The appeals process

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

11.6 Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management should review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

12. Procedures for notifying the school about reasons for absence from school.

Parents/ Guardians are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child in Scoil Bhríde Midleton by:

1. Notifying the school e.g., phone call, Aladdin Connect, email or letter of the cause of the absence not later than the end of the third day of absence.
2. Sending in a signed, dated explanation of absence when the pupil returns to school. Such notes are an important part of the record keeping done to fulfill the requirements of reporting to the NEWB.
3. Continuous unexplained absence may result in invoking the Scoil Bhríde Midleton suspension and expulsion procedures for grievous breaches of the Code of Conduct.

13. Other Scoil Bhríde Midleton Policies related to Code of Behaviour

The following policies overlap in various ways with the Code of Behaviour:

- ✓ SPHE School Plan;
- ✓ Anti- Bullying Policy;

- ✓ Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy
- ✓ Health and Safety Policy;
- ✓ Supervision Policy;
- ✓ Acceptable Use Policy (Computers/Internet);
- ✓ Enrolment Policy;
- ✓ Positive Staff Working Relations;
- ✓ Staff Bullying/Harassment;
- ✓ Grievance Procedure;
- ✓ Accident Procedures;
- ✓ Attendance Policy
- ✓ Homework Policy;
- ✓ Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy;
- ✓ Administration of Medicines

14. When and where will behaviour be subjected to the Code of Behaviour?

Standards and rules in the Code of Behaviour will apply to all situations where the pupils are the responsibility of the school.

15. Ratification and Communication

This policy was updated officially by the Board of Management on 07/06/2023
Circulation of the updated policy to members of the school community will begin 8th June 2023. This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management, Scoil Bhríde Midleton.