

Code of Behaviour for Knockanean National School.

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Knockanean National School is required by legislation to prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students.¹ The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, stipulates that the school code of behaviour must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).²

This policy is founded upon the NEWB Guidelines, the school's existing Code of Behaviour and the successful practices of behaviour management that exist within the school.

Policy Formulation

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

- i. Parents Association 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.

The Mission Statement of Knockanean National School & the Code of Behaviour

The Mission Statement states that Knockanean National School aims to enable each child" to foster a love of learning, a spirit of justice and an acceptance of other children as we journey through life"

Knockanean National School strives to assist each child's holistic development in an atmosphere that is affirmative, caring and fully supported by all the stakeholders in the school

¹ Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 23

² Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008

– pupils, parents/guardians, teachers, ancillary staff, Board of Management, Parish and the wider community.

Knockanean National School aims to “provide an education of the highest standard, full of challenges, colour, excitement and above all, full of the joys of learning”

The Code of Behaviour outlined below stems from the aspirations set out in the school’s mission statement.

Where and when the Code of Behaviour for Knockanean N.S. will apply

This Code of Behaviour will apply to all school activities, regardless of timing and location. This will encompass the normal school day, activities that may extend beyond normal opening and closing times and all extra-curricular activities such as tours and games.

Aims of the Code of Behaviour

The school’s code of behaviour aims:

- to create a positive environment where teaching and learning can occur
- to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, and consideration for others
- to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline among students
- to help our students mature into responsible and mature participants in a learning community
- to assist parents/guardians and pupils in understanding the expectations and procedures that underpin the code of behaviour
- to ensure that all procedures of reward or sanction are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Approach to promoting positive school behaviour

It is in the interest of the school community that positive school behaviour is promoted and valued in our school. To this end, a whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour operates in Knockanean N.S. An approach based upon partnership contributes to the maintenance and improvement of the school's positive atmosphere of respect and consideration for all.

Roles and responsibilities in relation to behaviour

- Every pupil has the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment. It is the responsibility of every pupil to contribute to the creation and maintenance of this environment as fully as possible.
- The principal teacher and the school staff have the duty to promote positive behaviour at all times in a considerate and fair manner.
- Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children abide by the expectations outlined in this code.
- The Board of Management is responsible for overseeing the creation and implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

General Standards of Positive Behaviour

In Knockanean National School, the following standards of behaviour are expected of all members of the school community:

- Respect for self and others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Respect for the school buildings and furniture
- Fairness in all dealings
- Kindness and a willingness to help others

Note: "School community" will be understood to mean pupils, parents/guardians, teachers, ancillary staff and visitors to the school.

Knockanean National School expects that all pupils, supported by parents/guardians, will endeavour to implement the above principles by:

- attending school as regularly as possible
- being punctual
- being dressed appropriately
- always giving of one's best effort
- taking responsibility for one's own work
- observing all rules
- respecting staff
- respecting other students, their learning and their property
- participating fully (within one's capacity) in school activities

Positive school behaviour should encompass all aspects of a child's time in Knockanean National School. Promoting good behaviour is the goal of this code. Seven specific areas are identified in order to identify expected behaviours in particular situations. These are:

1. Classroom behaviour
2. Playground behaviour
3. Indoor recreation on wet days
4. Behaviour in other school areas
5. Behaviour on school-related activities
6. Behaviour on arrival in school prior to the official start of lessons
7. Behaviour upon dismissal from class at the end of lessons

Classroom Behaviour

Each teacher will have a set of expected classroom behaviours for his/her class level. The following general behaviours will apply to all classrooms.

In Knockanean National School pupils are expected to:

- respect and attend to the teacher at all times
- respect the other pupils, their learning and their property

- respect all classroom furniture
- attempt all assignments at the teacher's direction
- engage fully with any and all activities underway in the classroom
- walk in the classroom at all times
- obtain the teacher's permission to leave the classroom
- leave their desk, seat and floor space tidy at the end of the day
- use the appropriate containers for any waste
- enter and leave their classrooms quietly
- show respect to any visitors to their classrooms

Playground behaviour

Children have the opportunity to play and socialise with each other at morning and lunch break times. On the playground and on the field all pupils are expected:

- to follow the general rules of respect towards one another
- to follow the supervising teacher's directions
- to respect the boundaries between the junior and senior classes
- to remain on school grounds at all times
- to obtain permission from the supervising teacher before entering the school building to use the bathroom facilities
- to keep from littering the playground or field areas
- to avoid any games or play that is rough or dangerous
- to be fair in setting up games
- to keep from using inappropriate language or gestures (this applies to every school situation)
- to line up quietly in their lines upon hearing the end-of-break bell

Expected behaviour on wet days when indoor recreation is required

It is often necessary for students to remain in the classrooms on wet days. The following behaviours are expected on such occasions:

- pupils will remain seated at their desks
- pupils will undertake activities provided by the class teacher
- pupils will seek permission from the supervising teacher before leaving their seats

Behaviour in other school areas

- Pupils are expected to walk in the school corridors at all times.
- Pupils are expected to treat the bathroom/toilet areas with respect for all other users.
- Pupils are required to walk when entering or exiting the school grounds and buildings at all times
- As the car park is a particular area of danger, pupils are required to exercise the fullest possible care when in the car park.

Behaviour on school related activities

On occasion, the pupils will leave the school grounds to participate in school related activities. Such activities may include – games, swimming, library visits, church events, school tours and other events that may arise from time to time. These activities may take place during the school day or outside normal school hours. The following behaviours are expected:

- Pupils will obey teachers' directions at all times
- Pupils will remain with their teachers and supervisors at all times
- Pupils are required to behave courteously towards those they meet on such trips
- Pupils are required to behave on such trips as they would at school

Behaviour on arrival in school prior to the official start of lessons

Upon arrival in school prior to the official start of lessons, pupils are expected to:

- leave their school bags tidily at their places and proceed to the school yard for play

- remain seated in their places if the day is wet
- behave at all times as if they were on break and follow the rules of the school

Behaviour upon dismissal from class at the end of lessons

Pupils will be dismissed from class in an orderly fashion by their respective class teachers. This section is designed to enable pupils commence the journey from school in a safe fashion. To facilitate this process pupils are expected to:

- obey the directions of all staff members to ensure a safe handover to parents/guardians
- walk to the school gates at all times
- refrain from any behaviour that would endanger themselves or others
- avoid ball-playing, hitting or general jostling that may result in injury or harm
- refrain from climbing on the school boundary walls or gate piers

School Rules:

The following list of school rules was devised by the staff to facilitate the implementation of our Code of Behaviour. This list of rules will be displayed in each classroom to enable us to adopt a whole school approach to managing behaviour and to aid a seamless transition from class to class.

1. Know when, where and how to talk and listen.
2. Respect yourself, other people, their property and school property.
3. Homework and school work must be completed to the best of each child's ability.
4. Full uniform must be worn at all times.
5. Be on time, be prepared and be prompt.
6. Obey the bells on the school yard and walk quietly while indoors.

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

The main goal of this policy is to promote good behaviour in Knockanean National School. The pupils' internal sense of good behaviour serves as a daily guide of how to behave

properly. This has its genesis in their class experiences, how the teacher models good behaviour and the knowledge they have gleaned from their parents and siblings. In Knockanean N.S., the following strategies will be adopted to enhance the generally positive behaviour evident in the school:

- the promotion of a positive atmosphere in all school situations, e.g. the acknowledgement of effort and achievement on a regular basis
- the delivery of as varied and interesting a curriculum as possible within the parameters of class sizes and availability of resources
- the creation of good school and class routines, e.g. the standardisation of procedures such as the starting/ending of the school day across all class levels
- the establishment of clear boundaries and rules for students, e.g. the display and regular emphasis on what the rules are, why they are there and how they are operated
- the recognition and affirmation of good learning behaviour
- the provision of positive feedback about pupils' behaviour, e.g. verbal or written acknowledgement to the pupils themselves and/or their parents
- the exploration of how pupils should best treat each other, e.g. through whole-class discussions and/or circle time
- the involvement of pupils in the creation and implementation of school and classroom rules, e.g. the creation of a student council to discuss what desirable behaviours should be evident in the classroom

The above items will be reviewed on a regular basis at formal and informal staff meetings. Instances may arise when spontaneous discussions/explorations of behavioural issues need to take place. This will take place within the context of a whole-school approach to managing behaviour.

Rewards and sanctions

It is at the discretion of each individual teacher as to how they reward positive behaviour. The following are some of the reward systems in place in classes:

Friday treats/ Lucky dip on Friday

Student of the day

Homework Pass

Green Card for individual good behaviour- Golden time

Group star charts

Tables King and Queen of the week

Group star chart

Individual points chart

Gold stars culminating in homework pass

Buachaill/Cailín na seachtaine

Extra P.E.

Infant teachers may use their own discretion in regard to rewards.

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

The following are the school guidelines for the use of rewards in class:

- Reward systems must be operated fairly, openly and consistently
- Reward systems must be meaningful
- Pupils must understand what rewards are being given for
- Rewards are linked in time to the behaviours on display
- Rewards will be given for effort and achievement
- Rewards are deployed in an inclusive manner
- Good behaviour may be acknowledged in the regular school newsletters

Rewards and children with special needs

The relevant class teacher/resource teacher will determine the best system of rewarding pupils with special needs. This will take into account the pupils' specific learning styles and personal needs.

Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

The purpose of this section is to outline measures that may be taken if a pupil fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined in the Code of Behaviour. A whole-school approach is adopted with regard to the recognition of inappropriate behaviour and the resultant imposition of suitable sanctions. The purpose of a sanction is to ensure, as far as possible, that the child will learn from the imposition of the sanction and recognise how to avoid subsequent transgressions.

Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 states that the school must outline "the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined". To achieve this, Knockanean N.S. operates a systematic approach in responding to a student's misbehaviour. **It must be noted that though this list contains a wide range of behaviours it is intended to serve as an illustration.** From time to time behaviours may occur that were not anticipated but the school staff is required to exercise its professional judgement in such situations. The approach is operated by each individual teacher with reference to the whole-school approach to behaviour management. There are three elements to this whole-school approach:

- a list of agreed ways of describing inappropriate behaviour
- a system of recording behaviour
- a framework of intervention based upon the level of misbehaviour

1. A list of agreed ways of describing inappropriate behaviour

The following categories of behaviour are deemed inappropriate in Knockanean N.S. because they are detrimental to good order and the effective conduct of teaching and learning in the school.

Category	Description	Sanctions
Minor misbehaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interrupting the teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal reprimand

<p>(requiring the intervention of teacher and/or principal teacher)</p>	<p>and/or class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to observe the class teacher's rules of behaviour • Bad manners • Teasing/name-calling • Failing to line up appropriately • Leaving a classroom in a disorderly fashion • Eating in class without permission • Eating of chewing gum in school • Running in the corridors • Playing roughly • Failing to do homework/school work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class removal from the group • Withdrawal of privileges at the discretion of class teacher and principal. • Sending to a partner teacher for a specified time or lesson period • Carrying out a useful task in the classroom • Providing a written explanation of the incident • Extra homework (at teachers discretion)
<p>Serious misbehaviour (requiring the intervention of teacher, principal and parents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting in the classroom • Fighting in the toilets/corridors • Fighting in the yard • Lying to a member of staff • Being disrespectful to a member of staff • Spitting • Writing notes of an inappropriate nature • Shouting in class • Arguing inappropriately • Defacing school tables, desks and walls • Refusing to follow school rules • Clogging toilets with tissue paper • Continually failing to take correction • Threatened physical assault on another child • Threatened physical assault on teachers and/or ancillary staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detention • Removal from class grouping by principal teacher • Reporting of incident to parents/guardians by principal teacher • Issuing of written warnings by principal teacher • Withdrawal of privileges at the discretion of class teacher and principal

<p>Gross misbehaviour (requiring the intervention of teacher, principal and Board of Management)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical assault on another child • Physical assault on teachers and/or ancillary staff • Verbal abuse of another child • Verbal abuse of teachers and/or ancillary staff • Stealing • Damaging school equipment intentionally and seriously • Damaging teachers’/staff members’ property • Inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature • Possession of pornographic material in print or digital form • Distribution of pornographic material in print or digital form • Smoking • Arson • Possession and distribution of alcohol or controlled substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detention • Reporting incident to parents and Board of Management in writing • Withdrawal of privileges at the discretion of class teacher and principal • Suspension • Expulsion
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A. Note: The above lists are illustrative. There may be incidents of behaviour that have not been foreseen. The teaching staff will have to use its professional expertise in dealing with any such situation. . Appropriate sanctions will apply in line with our Code of Behaviour, taking into consideration the age of the pupil. (Teachers will apply their professional judgement when dealing with infants/first class)

B Note: Re after school activities eg Music, Drama, Games etc

In addition to the above sanctions teachers/principal have the right to remove either temporarily or permanently pupils who continually misbehave or refuse to follow instructions at a particular activity.

2. Six step approach to aid teachers in implementing sanctions. (Teachers from time to time will have to use their own discretion in following these steps)

Note: Each step mentioned below will be prefaced by a verbal reprimand, allowing the pupil time to reflect and correct his/her behaviour. E.g. by the time a pupil reaches step 2 he/she has been spoken to ,on four separate occasions .

Step 1: Name recorded

Step 2: Move to another place in the classroom. (Before the pupil returns to his/her seat the teacher will discuss the inappropriate behaviour with the pupil. The purpose of this is to ensure, as far as possible, that the child will learn from the imposition of the sanction and recognise how to avoid subsequent transgressions.)

Step 3: Move to a partner teacher for 20 minutes with work to complete. (On return from the partner teacher the pupil will be given a standard note outlining his/her misbehaviour. Discussions will again take place between teacher and pupil, as in step 2, in the hope of avoiding further transgressions. This note is to be signed by parents.)

Step 4: Detention and principal informed. (Parents will be informed by standard note that their son/daughter will be placed on detention. This note will also give details of misbehaviour.)

Step 5: Suspension. (See page 15)

Step 6: Expulsion. (See page 20)

Note:

- A. Serious or Gross misbehaviour can bypass steps 1, 2, or 3 and result in immediate detention or suspension depending on the severity of the offence.
- B. Any pupil continually ending up on step 3 will be placed on detention.
- C. Any pupil continually ending up on detention, principal will speak with parents informing them if misbehaviour continues the school will have no choice but to suspend the pupil.(In the interest of the other pupils in the class/school)
- D. Detention will be in Shona's room as is required and supervised by the teacher on duty that day. For the duration of Covid 19 restrictions , detention will be supervised by the principal

Sanctions for yard:

- B. For minor misbehaviour pupil will stand by wall for 5 to 10 minutes. (Teacher on yard will speak with pupil with the hope of avoiding a similar occurrence.)
- C. For serious misbehaviour pupil's name will be recorded in yard book. Class teacher will also be informed. Again teacher/pupil discussions will take place. Appropriate sanctions will apply in line with our Code of Behaviour, taking into consideration the age of the pupil. (Teachers will apply their professional judgement when dealing with infants/first class)

Covid 19: All pupils must adhere to Department of Education and Skills guidelines, rules and procedures as per our Response Plan and as per direction/instruction from school staff, to deal with preventing the spread of Covid 19. Sanctions will be applied depending on which category above the indiscretion falls into

2. A system of recording behaviour The school staff will record misbehaviour in the following manner. Incidents of minor misbehaviour will be recorded in writing by the individual teacher dealing with the incident(s) in question. Where necessary, that teacher will inform the child's own class teacher of the misbehaviour. Incidents of a serious or gross nature will be recorded in the Behavioural Incident Report Book. The incident will be recorded in a detached manner giving the facts only. Pupil initials and/or roll number will be used to maintain confidentiality.

3. A framework for intervention (sanctions) based upon the level of misbehaviour

The following table illustrates the staged approach to be adopted with regard to intervention in instances of misbehaviour. It matches the intervention with the appropriate personnel.

Type of misbehaviour	Personnel involved
Minor misbehaviour	Occasional, minor misbehaviour will be attended to routinely by the class teacher and/or the teacher on supervision duty.
Serious misbehaviour	Serious misbehaviour (or persistent minor misbehaviour) will be attended to by the class teacher, supervising teacher and principal teacher. This level of misbehaviour will involve notification of parents.
Gross misbehaviour	The teacher, principal teacher, parents; Board

	of Management will be involved at this stage. Outside agencies such as NEPS, the NEWB and the Garda Síochána may become involved at this stage. The school will also contact the Diocesan Education Office/CPSMA for advice and support at this stage.
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Consistency in the application of sanctions will be ensured by constant communication between staff members and by means of a review of sanctions at the termly staff meetings.

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

This section of the Code of Behaviour deals with the means of involving parents in the management of misbehaviour. Knockanean N.S. recognises the importance of involving parents fully in the general implementation of the Code of Behaviour. While a philosophy of “prevention is better than cure” is desirable, it must be acknowledged that parental support is critical to the effective handling of difficult behaviours. To this end, the following steps will be implemented:

1. Parents will be contacted by the class teacher in the event of repeated minor misbehaviours. (On reaching step 3)
2. In the event of serious or gross misbehaviours, the principal teacher will initiate contact with the relevant parents (On reaching step 4)
3. Parents will be invited to the school to discuss the incident in question. The meeting will be convened with the best interests of the pupil, the parents and the school to the fore. A tone of respect should be evident at all times by all parties to the discussion.
4. The pupil in question may attend for part of the meeting if deemed necessary by the teacher, principal and parents.
5. A written record of the meeting must be kept and should, if possible, be signed by all parties at the end of the proceedings.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

Aggressive or violent misbehaviour will be handled in the following manner and with immediate action:

- Children who pose a serious physical threat to themselves, other pupils and/or staff will be referred immediately for psychological assessment through NEPS, CEIS and/or the Health Service Executive.
- In the event of a child with aggressive tendencies applying for enrolment, the Board of Management will make provision for staff to be trained in manual restraint/control techniques that are safe and appropriate.
- Advice will be sought from the St. Senan's Education Office/CPSMA

Suspension/Expulsion

Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 stipulates that schools must include suspension and expulsion procedures in the Code of Behaviour. This aspect of the Code of Behaviour for Knockanean National School follows the guidelines in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" (NEWB, 2008).³

Definition of "Suspension"

The NEWB Guidelines define suspension as "requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days".⁴

Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management of Knockanean National School has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an 'Immediate Suspension' to the Principal Teacher. An

³ See Chapters 10 – 12 inclusive

⁴ Chapter 10, p. 70

‘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.

Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension	Occurs when the principal teacher may consider that a pupil’s continued presence “would represent a serious threat to the safety of the students or staff of the school, or any other person”. ⁵
Automatic suspension	Occurs when the gross misbehaviours listed above are evident.
Rolling suspension	Will occur when a pupil: Re-engages in serious or gross misbehaviours after returning from a previous suspension
Informal or unacknowledged suspension	Occurs when parents are asked to keep a child from school for part of the school day

⁵ NEWB Guidelines, p. 73

	for serious or gross misbehaviours.
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Procedures in respect of suspension

Knockanean N.S. is required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. The NEWB Guidelines iterate that fair procedures have two essential parts:

- (1) the right to be heard and (2) the right to impartiality

Sections 10.3 and 10.4 of the Guidelines outline these principles in detail. See pages 66 – 68.

The following procedures will be followed:

Informing the student and parents

- The student and his/her parents will be informed about the complaint in question
- The student and his/her parents will be informed about how the complaint in question will be investigated
- Parents may be informed by phone or in writing of the matter

Giving student and parents an opportunity to respond

- If possible, parents will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed (an exception may apply here in the event of a gross misbehaviour whereby pupils or staff are endangered by a child's continuing presence)

Procedural steps in relation to immediate suspension

- An investigation of the incident should establish the case for immediate suspension
- A formal investigation should follow the imposition of the suspension
- The same conditions for suspension will apply to immediate suspension

The period of suspension

A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances where the principal teacher considers that a period of suspension of longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a specific objective.

Suspensions for periods longer than three days will be referred to a meeting of the Board of Management.

Appealing a suspension

The Board of Management is obliged to advise parents of their right to appeal a suspension. The parents may appeal to the Board in the event of a suspension being made by the principal teacher. Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 parents have a right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. (See p. 76, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools)

Implementing a suspension

In the event of a suspension, the principal teacher will confirm in writing to parents⁶:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- a recommended study programme to be followed during the suspension
- arrangements for returning to the school and a reaffirmation of their commitment to the Code of Behaviour
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science

Removing a suspension

The Guidelines direct that a suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to do so for any reason or “if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and

⁶ The NEWB Guidelines recommend that the letter “should be easy to understand” and that “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.” See pp. 76 – 77.

Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998". This directive will be implemented by Knockanean National School.

Re-integrating the pupil who had been suspended

The school will support the pupil's re-integration by arranging for a member of staff not involved in the suspension to act as a link with the pupil, the parents and the teacher(s) involved. This will involve the monitoring of the pupil's behaviour, his commitment to the Code of Behaviour and catching up on work missed owing to the suspension. Knockanean National School will afford the pupil in question the opportunity to start over with a clean slate.

Maintenance of written records and reports

In order to be fair and transparent the following procedures will be followed with regard to the maintenance of written records in cases of suspension:

- A written account of the allegation against a pupil will be created
- An account of the investigation will be written and will include notes taken at interviews
- A written account of the decision-making process will be made
- A written account of the decision and the rationale for the decision will be made
- A written record of the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension, the appeals process and the provisions for return to school will be made
- The principal will provide the Board of Management with a written account to all suspensions made
- The principal will report suspensions to the NEWB in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (4) (a)

Reviewing the use of suspension

The Board of Management of Knockanean National School will review the use of suspension in the school to ensure that it is line with the NEWB Guidelines and that the system is fair and follows proper procedure. This review will happen in the aftermath of a suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion of a pupil is defined by the NEWB as 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”⁷.

The Board of Management of Knockanean National School has the authority to expel a pupil. It is considered that this is a right reserved to the Board of Management and that it cannot be delegated.⁸ As expulsion is a serious action to take, a number of key principles will apply:

- the expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student’s behaviour
- all previous efforts to address serious misbehaviour should be considered to have failed before an expulsion is recommended
- a pupil and his/her parents/guardians will understand that the consequences of repeated misbehaviour and that the failure to amend his/her ways may result in expulsion from the school
- the assistance of support agencies has been sought

Expulsion recommendations require the following serious grounds:

- the pupil’s behaviours were of gross nature (see listing above)
- the behaviour is a **persistent** cause of **significant** disruption to the learning of others and to the teaching process
- the pupil’s continued presence in the school is real and significant threat to safety
- the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

⁷ Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, p. 80

⁸ Ibid.

Expulsion for a first offence

The following behaviours will result in the recommendation of expulsion upon a first offence. The rationale for this is that the behaviours are so unacceptable as to form a threat to the safety of the general school population:

- a serious threat of violence against another pupil
- a serious threat of violence against a member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- sexual assault

The following factors will be considered before proposing to expel a student⁹:

1. the nature and seriousness of the behaviour
2. the context of the behaviour
3. the impact of the behaviour
4. the interventions tried to date
5. whether expulsion is a proportionate response
6. the possible impact of expulsion

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

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

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

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

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

⁹ Ibid., p. 83

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

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

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

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

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

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.

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- 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 Knockanean 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.

Appeals

The Board of Management of Knockanean National School will, in the event of an expulsion process being activated, inform the pupil and parents of their rights in this matter. The NEWB Guidelines state that “a parent . . . may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act, 1998)” and that “an

appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student".¹⁰

Reviewing the use of expulsion

The Board of Management of Knockanean National School will review the use of expulsion in the school to ensure that it is line with the NEWB Guidelines and that the system is fair and follows proper procedure. This review will happen in the aftermath of an expulsion process taking place.

Maintenance of written records and reports

In order to be fair and transparent the following procedures will be followed with regard to the maintenance of written records in cases of expulsion:

- A written account of the allegation against a pupil will be created
- An account of the investigation will be written and will include notes taken at interviews
- A written account of the decision-making process will be made
- A written account of the decision and the rationale for the decision will be made
- The principal will report suspensions to the NEWB in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (4) (a)

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;

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 86

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified in writing by *letter / using the school journal*
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

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 (Pupils File) 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. GDPR, May 25th 2018

Plan for reviewing the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed in the following manner:

1. It will be a permanent item on the agenda of the first and last Board of Management meetings of each academic year and

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2. It will be reviewed in the aftermath of a serious incident or series of incidents involving serious and/or gross misbehaviour
3. This Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with our Anti –Bullying Policy
4. **cf Knockanean National School Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement 2018**

Approval of the Code of Behaviour for Knockanean National School

Reviewed and approved by the Board of Management: _____

Signed: _____

Patron's Approval



Template for reviewing the Code of Behaviour (Rules)

Date of review	
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Knockanean N.S.

Teachers present	
Reason for review	
Next review scheduled for:	

Behavioural situation	Is this rule working? Yes/No	If no, why?	Suggested change
Classroom behaviour			
Playground behaviour			
Wet day behaviour			
Other school areas			
School-related activities			
Before lessons			
At end of lessons			

Other inclusions:

Delegation of Authority to suspend a pupil.

14th May 2013

Principal

Knockanean N.S.

Dear Jim,

As discussed at a recent Board of Management meeting, the Board delegate to you the authority to impose an “Immediate Suspension”. An “Immediate Suspension” may be for a period of one to three school days.

The Board of Management also delegate to you the authority to impose an “Automatic Suspension” for named behaviours in the school’s Code of Behaviour policy. An “Automatic Suspension” may be for a period of one to three days, depending on the severity of the specific behaviour.

Yours sincerely,

Canon Caimín O Carroll (Chairperson, Board of Management)

References

Education Act, 1998, Government of Ireland

Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Government of Ireland

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board, 2008

Developing a Code of Behaviour, St Senan’s Education Office, PowerPoint Presentation, 2009

Working Together for Positive Behaviour, Lyons et al, Curriculum Development Unit, Mary Immaculate College, 2006

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