

SCOIL MUIRE AGUS ÍDE
NEWCASTLE WEST,
CO. LIMERICK

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Scoil Mhuire agus Íde is a Catholic all ability school committed to providing opportunities to develop the unique talents of all our students in a positive, challenging and caring learning environment. Our Mission Statement and ethos urges all in the school community to be the best that we can be and to strive to achieve our personal best – whatever that may be. Our most important concern here in SMI is to provide a teaching and learning environment designed to achieve this.

Our Code of Behaviour aims to promote good behaviour and self-control, helping to create a safe, secure learning environment for all members of the school community. The core principles which underpin our Code of Behaviour are as follows:

- We aim to create a climate within our school which encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- To help our students to mature into responsible participating citizens
- To build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- To ensure that our school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

SUMMARY OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS

Normal reprimanding will be done by the teacher in charge of the class or by the teacher present on any occasion according to the strategies suggested under our Code of Behaviour.

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in behaviour of disruptive pupils. Misbehavior is recorded and sanctions given by each teacher in a Discipline Book which is kept in the office. Once a week this book is scrutinised by the Disciplinary Committee, which comprises of the Year Heads, Principal and Deputy Principal. This Disciplinary Committee will decide whether any student's misbehaviour merits further sanction.

However, before resorting to serious sanctions, e.g., suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be fully utilised. Parents will be involved and their active co-operation sought at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. They can be assured of a fair hearing and will be informed of their right of appeal.

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Note in School Journal to be signed by parents
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others –
- Prescribing additional work including school /community work
- Detention during lunch time
- Loss of other privileges

When the above sanctions fail -

- Referral to Year Head
- A Disciplinary Committee Meeting (Year Heads, Principal and Deputy Principal) is held once a week and deals with incidents which have been entered into the Discipline Book during the previous week.
- Failure to correct indiscipline at this level may necessitate a suspension

IN THE CASE OF SERIOUS MISCONDUCT THE ABOVE PROCEDURES NEED NOT APPLY AND THE PUPIL MAY BE SUSPENDED IMMEDIATELY WITH THE FURTHER POSSIBILITY OF EXPULSION.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In the case of misbehaviour by a student communication with parents/guardians by the Class Teacher or Year Head will be through the School Journal, by telephone or by letter, depending on the circumstances. The parents/guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. For gross misbehaviour, or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension/expulsion may follow.

If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period.

The management authority empowers the Principal to sanction a suspension of a student in situations where it is the only option left.

Expulsion will be considered only after every effort at rehabilitation has failed and every other sanction exhausted. Only the Board of Management has the power to expel.

Parents/guardians of a student who continually misbehaves may be asked to have their child referred for psychological assessment without delay.

In formulating this Code, account has been taken of the observations of the body representing the parents/guardians of the pupils attending the school.

It is our belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents/guardians, every effort will be made by the Principal and Staff to ensure they are kept well-informed, through school journal, subject copy or by phone. We believe that parents/guardians should not only be informed when their children are in trouble but also when they have behaved particularly well.

**THIS CODE WILL BE REVIEWED AT AGREED
REGULAR INTERVALS.**

School Rules and Regulations

- Students are expected to be in attendance each day from 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.
- Courtesy, respect, and good manners are basic to good behaviour and are expected at all times.
- The school expects that students will follow all reasonable instructions given by any member of staff and co-operate as required.
- If a student needs to leave school during the school day the procedure is as follows: The student presents a note from parents/guardians to the Year Head who issues a Permission Slip which is then presented at the office. The student is then allowed to leave provided they are being collected by a parent/guardian.
- Students may not leave the classroom without permission - if permission is granted the teacher writes a note in the student's Journal and the student brings his/her Journal with them.
- If a student is absent he/she is expected to give a note explaining such absence to their Year Head when they return to school.
- A student who leaves the school building without permission during the school day is liable to severe sanction.
- Full school uniform must be worn by students during the school day and on all school related outings – unless otherwise informed.
- Students who arrive late for class in the morning must report to the office where they will be given a Late Slip which they present to their Class Teacher. Students who arrive after 9.40am must bring a note explaining lateness signed by a parent/guardian.
- Persistent absences or lateness requires that parents be contacted.
- In the interest of safety students are not allowed use the school grounds for parking facilities.
- First, Second and Third Year Students are not allowed downtown during lunchtime. Canteen facilities are provided in the school. Students also have the option of bringing their own lunch. Senior students have been given the privilege of going out of school at lunchtime. The Board of Management wishes to advise that no student of Scoil Mhuire & Íde is allowed to have lunch in a Licensed Premises during this time. Breach of this rule will necessitate the student remaining in school during Lunchtime. Any reported incident of misbehaviour or lack of punctuality may result in this privilege being removed from Senior Students.
- Scoil Mhuire agus Íde has a zero tolerance policy on the use of drugs, solvents and alcohol. If you use any of these substances you may be suspended or expelled.

- Smoking is absolutely forbidden in the school grounds and at school entrances. Please also note that it is against the law for anyone to smoke in the school.
- Students are expected to care for their own and school property and respect that of others. Students must not interfere with property that does not belong to them.
- Each student is provided with a locker. Students are advised to get a good quality lock to protect their books and valuables. Students are not allowed to go to their lockers between classes
- Theft is a serious offence and may lead to suspension or expulsion.
- Vandalism and disrespect for school property is a most serious offence and students must make good any damage caused to property. All damage to property must be reported immediately to the office.
- Jewellery to be kept to a minimum. No jewellery associated with body piercing, except one ear-ring or stud in each ear, is allowed. For safety reasons, jewellery must not be worn during P.E. or practical classes.
- Students in First, Second and Third Year (Junior Years) are not allowed wear make up.
- Bullying, or any form of intimidation towards any person, whether student, teacher or any school personnel, is considered a serious offence. Parents/guardians, staff and students should report any concerns directly to the school. There are clear guidelines laid out in our Anti-Bullying Policy and each reported incident will be documented and dealt with thoroughly. Any re-occurrence of the behaviour complained of will be deemed a very serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and may incur a suspension.
- We are a 'telling school' – bullying is too serious not to report. Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying. The Equal Status Act, 2000 cites nine grounds of discrimination
 - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the traveling community*
 Behaviour is expected that respects diversity across all nine grounds.
- It is the duty of the Board of Management to ensure the health and safety of both staff and students. Any use of offensive language, harassment, gross misbehaviour, or aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards another member of the school community is not acceptable and will be regarded as a serious breach of the Code that warrants severe sanction.

- Students involved in violent and/or dangerous behaviour will be suspended, for safety reasons, during any investigation, and the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.
- Running, pushing, shouting etc. in any form within the school building is forbidden.
- Eating of sweets, lunches etc. is strictly forbidden in the classroom and resource areas.
- Mobile Phone use is forbidden within the school. Students have access to the school phone in the office should they need to communicate with home. If a student needs a mobile phone for before/after school arrangements it must be secured safely and switched off. If a mobile phone is confiscated by a staff member and handed in to the office it may incur a suspension and it will only be returned to the student when a parent/guardian comes to the school to collect it.
- A student who refuses to hand up a mobile phone when requested by a teacher will incur a suspension, as this is considered a very serious breach of discipline.
- Misuse of the Internet within the school may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- Items causing disruption or danger or nuisance are not allowed in school and will be confiscated, to be collected by parents or guardians at a specified time. These include, laser pens, sprays, permanent markers, Tippex, etc. Other items may be added to this list if and when necessary, and students, parents/guardians will be notified.
- Chewing gum is forbidden in the school and those found in breach of this will be given community work.
- Occasions may arise when it is considered necessary to search a student's property in the investigation of a particular breach of the Code of Behaviour e.g. substance use/abuse, theft. This might take the form of:
 - Search of a student's locker
 - Search of a student's school bag
 - An instruction to a student to empty his/her schoolbag or pockets or locker

Such action must be authorised by the Principal, Deputy Principal or delegated agent. Where possible parents and guardians will be contacted by phone, made aware of the situation and their support for the action sought. Any search required will be carried out by the Principal, Deputy Principal or delegated agent, in the presence of another member of staff and the student involved.

- On their journey to and from school students are expected to show respect and consideration for fellow bus users (if applicable), road users and local residents.
- School authority over its students, therefore, is not confined to school grounds only. It also applies during lunchtime, on occasions such as school outings, trips to games, school tours etc. Once a student is clearly recognisable as a student of the school (e.g. wearing the school uniform) he/she is subject to the authority of the school. A student who behaves in a way that is likely to bring the school into disrepute will be severely sanctioned. The school has a right to safeguard its good name.

The school reserves the right to amend or add to the above rules as becomes necessary.

A MORE DETAILED OUTLINE OF SCALED SANCTIONS IN OPERATION IN SCOIL MUIRE AGUS ÍDE

Sanctions are used so that our students experience the consequences of their misbehaviour, and are assisted and supported in modifying their behaviour. In SMI these sanctions are scaled to take account of the nature of the incident, the situation leading up to the incident and the age of the student.

Minor Infringements

Within the classroom, the subject/class teacher will correct and discipline a student where necessary. An Incident Report Sheet documenting the incident will be kept by the teacher concerned. The following are general guidelines but teachers are also free to develop their own individual system of classroom rules and sanctions collaboratively with each class.

- A firm reprimand is expected to be sufficient to correct inappropriate behaviour.
- The incident may be recorded in the student's Journal, to be noted and co-signed by parent/guardian and their assistance sought.
- The nature of the unacceptable behaviour will be explained to the student.
- An undertaking to abide by the class rules and Code of Behaviour may be sought.
- Extra written work may be given to the student.

Repeat of Misconduct or More Serious Misconduct

- Repeated misconduct or more serious misconduct will result in further sanctions and a record will be kept of the specific details of the incident by the teacher concerned and a copy will be kept in the school's Incident Report Sheet Folder.
- Further sanctions can include
 - ✓ Referral of the incident to the Year Head.
 - ✓ Further written work
 - ✓ Removal of the student from the scene of the incident. The student may be moved to a different place within the classroom or placed (with work) in another classroom by arrangement with that teacher.
 - ✓ Parents/guardians being contacted by telephone, letter or through the Journal.
 - ✓ Detention – parents/guardians will be notified of any detention, at the latest, the day before the detention. They will be advised of the

reason for it, the date and duration of the Detention and they will be asked to sign a Detention Slip.

- ✓ Being put on a daily Report Sheet.
- ✓ Being assigned a community task, such as collecting litter, tidying Assembly or Canteen area, etc.
- ✓ Exclusion from a certain activity or activities.
- ✓ Meeting with a parent/guardian in the school.

Persistent Breaches of the Code

Sanctions for consistent breaches of our Code of Behaviour include:

- ✓ A meeting with the Disciplinary Committee.
- ✓ A written undertaking by the student to abide by the Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ In house suspension from a particular subject(s) for a limited time.
- ✓ Student placed on a reduced timetable.
- ✓ Suspension from school (in accordance with the school's policy on Suspension and Expulsion).
- ✓ Exclusion from school in accordance with the school's policy on Suspension and Expulsion).

Suspension

Suspension is a very serious sanction. A student may be suspended when other interventions have failed and when the following procedures have been followed:

- ✓ The student has been reminded of his/her agreement to abide by the Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ Internal and external support has been considered
- ✓ Parents/guardians have been involved in discussion with the school.
- ✓ Diagnostic assessments have been carried out, where appropriate.
- ✓ The student has been given a written warning, together with clear expectations of what is required in the future.

Suspension following a Single Incident

Suspension following a single incident may occur in cases of very serious misconduct, some examples of which are:

- ✓ Disrespectful behaviour
- ✓ Abusive language
- ✓ Blatant disobedience
- ✓ Extreme disruption of class
- ✓ Conflict between students
- ✓ Violent/aggressive behaviour or threats

- ✓ Presence of weapons or illegal substances, etc.
- ✓ Vandalism
- ✓ Interfering with safety equipment
- ✓ Stealing
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ Leaving school without permission
- ✓ Bringing the school into disrepute

Length of Suspension

The length of a suspension will relate to the seriousness of the misbehaviour leading to the suspension and to the student's recent record.

- ✓ When a student is suspended for a period of 6 days or more, the Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school.
- ✓ If a student is suspended for a cumulative total of 20 days in one school year, the Principal will inform the Education Welfare Board.

Suspension Procedures

1. The Disciplinary Committee makes the decision to suspend based on the Code of Behaviour.
2. The student is informed of the reason for the suspension and is given an opportunity to respond.
3. Parents/guardians are contacted. They are invited to meet with the relevant Year Head and Principal or Deputy Principal.
4. The student will be supervised until suspension takes effect. He/she will not be sent home unless collected or authorized by a parent or guardian.
5. The formal letter will include:
 - Notice of suspension
 - Effective date(s) of suspension
 - Duration of suspension
 - Notification that student is under parental care/supervision while suspended and emphasizing the importance of parental support.
 - The student must stay away from the school and its vicinities and from all school organized events during a period of suspension.
 - Statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed, where appropriate.

- Information on right to appeal (internal school appeal and/or Section 29 Appeal).
- Procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into school.
- Requirements to be fulfilled when the student returns, e.g. written apology/completed assignments.
- Notification if consideration is being given to expulsion.

The 're-admission following suspension' form will be enclosed with the letter.

Re-admission following Suspension

- A parent or guardian will be requested to attend with the student on the day of their return.
- The student will be asked to give an undertaking to abide by the school code.
- Special conditions of returning, e.g. counselling, referral to NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) or pastoral support will be agreed to by the parents/guardians and the student concerned.
- The student may be re-admitted on a phased basis or a limited timetable, at the discretion of the Principal and the Board of Management.

Expulsion

A student may be expelled by the Board of Management if

- All other sanctions have failed
- His/her behaviour places the safety of any member of the school community at risk.
- His/her behaviour is such that it interferes with the Constitutional Right of others to an education.

A period of suspension will precede a recommended expulsion and the parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management and given a chance to do so. This information will be sent by post, or delivered by a member of staff. The Education Welfare Board will be informed.

Code of Behaviour Review

The Code of Behaviour is under regular review and the present document is a revised and updated version of our former code and involved consultation with the students, parents/guardians, staff and Board of Management of our school. The present process began in September 2009. This updated version of our Code of Behaviour will

be presented to the Board of Management for approval in June 2011 and will become official school policy in September 2011.

Implementation

Enrolment in Scoil Mhuire agus Íde presumes acceptance of the Code of Behaviour.

As the official Code of Behaviour of our school, all registered students of our school will receive a copy of it in their School Journal. Parents/guardians, or students over 18 years of age, will be required to sign acceptance of it.

The Code is also available from the school on request and is also available on the Policy Section of our website, www.scoilmhuireaguside.ie.

