



School Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Our policy, based on the law of love, and rooted in the Mission Statement and aims of the school, gives pupils an understanding of the need for lawful authority, self-control, respect for others and their feelings, as well as the need for integrity, justice and peace as necessary ingredients for true happiness and success.

Its aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated, while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among the staff and between staff, parents and pupils.

Order and discipline are necessary for learning. Effective learning requires a high degree of attentiveness and participation on the part of pupils and an acceptance of the rules governing behaviour. General good manners and a high standard of behaviour are expected here.

Promoting Good/Positive Behaviour

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. Promoting good/positive behavior is the main goal of our Code of Behaviour. Teachers and other staff members will use some/all of the strategies mentioned below for promoting good behavior at class/school level.

Students are more likely to behave well when:

- They are given responsibility in the school and are involved in the development of the Code of Behaviour
- They understand why the code is important and their part in making it work
- They can see that the code works in a fair way
- There are standards that set high expectations for student behavior
- The standards are clear, consistent and widely understood
- Parents support the school by encouraging good learning behavior
- There are good relationships between teachers, parents and students and a happy school atmosphere
- Adults model the behavior that is expected from students

Other strategies to encourage positive behaviour between teachers and students:

- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- Good school and class routines
- Clear boundaries and rules for students
- Helping students themselves to recognize and affirm good learning behaviour
- Recognising and giving positive feedback about behavior
- Exploring with students how people should treat each other
- Involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules

While we endeavour to keep rules to a minimum, the following principles must be adhered to:

1. Pupils are required to show respect for school staff and for each other at all times. Visitors

- are always to be welcomed and treated in a courteous manner.
2. Pupils are required to attend school regularly and punctually.
 3. Pupils are required to wear the complete school uniform except on P.E. days when they are required to wear the school P.E. track suit.
 4. It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. Homework should always be completed to the best of the child's ability and presented carefully. A note to class teacher is required if homework has not been completed.
 5. A note from parents is required when
 - (a) A pupil has been absent
 - (b) A pupil goes home for lunch
 - (c) Permission is sought for leaving school early
 6. Healthy lunches are encouraged. Children are asked to bring a lunch box and plastic re-useable bottle. Pupils are not allowed to chew gum or eat crisps in school or on school grounds.
 7. Pupils are required to enter and leave the school through the door assigned to their particular class.
 8. Writing on or marking school property is totally unacceptable.
 9. Pupils must play safely at all times. Anti-social, dangerous or hurtful behaviour is forbidden, (*e.g. wrestling, headlocks, jockey backs, bullying, intimidation, teasing, jeering, fighting, spitting, kicking, charging in groups, bad language, exclusion*). Unfair treatment, bullying or isolation of any child is not only unacceptable but could, in serious cases, lead to suspension. Muire gan Smál has an anti-bullying policy.
 10. Pupils are not allowed to swing off the railing in front of the school, or off the bar close to the ramp near the front door. They are not allowed to play on the steps outside the front door or those leading to the balcony outside the assembly hall. Climbing over the fence around the school is forbidden except where permission is given. Climbing on to the school building itself is strictly forbidden.
 11. Permission from the Principal or classroom teacher is required if pupils wish to make a telephone call. Children are not allowed to have mobile phones in school. Our school encourages children to be active and interactive at break time and does not allow Gameboys, Nintendo games, portable playstations or such like to be part of school day.
 12. In the interest of safety, running through the corridors is strictly forbidden at all times and silence is encouraged on the corridors, in halls and in the cloakrooms.
 13. No collections (*toys, money, cards etc.*) are to be made by pupils without the prior permission of the Principal.
 14. Pupils are asked not to visit different classes during breaks and they are to use the bathrooms at official break-times, in so far as possible.
 15. It is the responsibility of all pupils to keep their classrooms and the school in general, including the playgrounds, litter free.

While the above rules are not deemed to be a comprehensive list in relation to discipline, they have been devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Matters may arise from time to time which require special consideration. These rules are stated below in a more child friendly way and will form the basis of the class rules devised at the beginning of each academic year by class teacher and class.

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at Muire gan Smál Primary School e.g. staff, parents, volunteers, visitors, sports coaches, students, other professionals and performing artists etc. have an important responsibility to model high standards of behavior, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behavior, through example, honesty and courtesy.

- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

School Rules

- We live by our school motto: I will accept everybody in my class just as they are and I will treat them with respect
- We show respect for self and others
- We show respect for our own property and the property of others
- We show respect for other students and their learning
- We are kind and willing to help others
- We follow instructions from staff immediately
- We walk quietly in the school building
- We show courtesy and good manners
- We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- We ask permission to leave the classroom/school
- We do our best in class
- We take responsibility for our own work
- We wear the appropriate uniform
- We follow our Healthy Eating Policy
- In our school we try to have **Kind Hands, Kind Feet & Kind Words**

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

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. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

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.

Incentives/Reward System

Part of the vision of Muire gan Smál is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise will be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal – sticker or stamp
- Reward chart - wall chart or computer chart
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegated some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly
- Rewarding good behavior and effort from the whole class will be activity based *e.g.* Golden Time or activities on the yard, hall or pitch

Disciplinary Action

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil will be referred to the principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

Parental support and co-operation in matters of discipline are vital in ensuring that a harmonious and healthy atmosphere exists within the school.

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

- (a) reasoning with the pupil.
- (b) reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- (c) temporary separation from peers, friends or others (*15 mins max*);
- (d) loss of privileges;
- (e) detention during a break;
- (f) communication with parents
- (g) prescribing additional work;
- (h) referral to principal;
- (i) Principal communicating with parents.
- (j) 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*)

In a case of serious breaches of discipline, the following steps may be taken:

- a) The teacher corrects the offender and records time and date of the offence.
- b) If the pupil fails to respond to the teacher's warning the problem is reported to the Principal who then reprimands the pupil and warns him/her of the consequences of persisting with unruly behaviour.
- c) If the problem continues, the parents are contacted verbally or by letter, depending on the circumstances, and discussion takes place between the child, parents, teacher and Principal.
- d) Suspension.

Suspension

"The Board of Management of a recognized school has the authority to suspend a student. Suspension should be a proportionate to the behavior that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behavior has had a seriously detrimental effect of the education of other students.

- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.”
 (NEWB – *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*)

Teachers will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents 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 will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher, member of staff or other pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

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 have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the board shall authorise the chairperson or principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6).

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care services provided by Health Boards.

Removal of suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

All members of the teaching staff and a representative of the parent body have been involved in planning the code. A copy of this code has been made available to all parents.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationship with parents, every effort will be made by the principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and the parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

The code will be reviewed at agreed intervals.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Management

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment

- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code
- Ratify the code

Principal's responsibilities

Promote a positive climate in the school

Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner

Arrange for review of the Code, as required

Teachers' Responsibilities

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern

Pupils' Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling

- Include other pupils in games and activities
- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school and class rules

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

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

This policy was reviewed and then ratified by the Board of Management in April, 2014.

Signed: _____ Date _____
(*Chairperson, Board of Management*)