

Scoil Réalta na Maidine

Code of Behaviour and Discipline

Scoil Réalta na Maidine
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In compliance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour and Discipline for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

This Code of Behaviour is based on the positive aspects of behaviour rather than on punishments or sanctions, although these are included in the appropriate section of our policy. Positive rules for behaviour in class and around the school are learned by pupils at the beginning of each school year. Staff members have engaged in Incredible Years training and use the principles outlined in this programme to encourage positive relationships and to encourage good behaviour.

Introduction:

Our vision is that of a caring, loving Catholic school where all children, whatever their ability, race or creed are cherished and respected equally for their uniqueness. The ethos of our school recognises the importance of a sense of community within the school and the existence of a high level of co-operation among teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, parents and the Board of Management and where everything we do is based on mutual respect.

Aims:

The aims of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline are to:

- Allow for the smooth and harmonious running of the school.
- Promote the safety and happiness of all children and staff in the school.
- Facilitate the development and education of all the children.
- Promote good behaviour and self-discipline among the children.
- Promote equality and fairness among all.
- Enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
- Increase the co-operation between home and school.
- Ensure consistency in the application of rules and sanctions.
- Outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be available to teachers in response to negative behaviour.

Code of Behaviour:

Rather than listing all the possible behaviours that might be unacceptable there are instead clear definitions of the differing roles and expectations of the people involved in the everyday life of the school.

Expectations of Pupils:

The school expects that pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and not miss days without good reason.
- Arrive on time.
- Not leave during the day without permission.
- Respect all school property.
- Wear the school uniform.
- Show respect for yourself and others.
- Avoid swearing, fighting or name calling.
- Listen to messages given and do as requested.
- Move quietly around the school and avoid causing disturbance.
- Keep the school tidy and litter-free.

Teachers expect that pupils will:

- Show him/her courtesy and respect.
- Accept his/her authority and responsibility and his/her right to teach and impose sanctions on those who behave badly.
- Come to school on time and have all the necessary materials.
- Listen when others are talking.
- Avoid distracting behaviour.
- Participate in all class activities.
- Follow the rules drawn up by pupils' class and school.

Fellow students expect that pupils will:

- Not bully them (Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Show acceptance and respect their differing personalities.
- Respect their property.
- Listen to them and acknowledge them.
- Share equipment and resources with them.
- Allow them to be part of the group.
- Speak to them with courtesy and respect.

Expectations of Scoil Réalta na Maidine:

Pupils expect that school will be:

- Safe.
- Happy.
- Suited to their learning style.
- Encouraging and supportive.
- Affirmation of pupils of all abilities.
- Able to deal with bullying and supportive of victims.

Parents/guardians expect that there will be:

- A safe and happy environment for their child.
- Recognition and provision for the individual differences of pupils.
- Support for children who need it.
- Fairness and consistency in the way children are dealt with.
- An atmosphere of support and inclusion rather than criticism.
- Contact at an early stage to inform them of any problems.
- A willingness to listen to their viewpoint.
- Suggestions and support about problems in school.

Teachers expect that there will be:

- Mutual support and encouragement.
- Co-operation to achieve the school's aims and objectives.
- A fair and consistent implementation of the school's discipline policy.
- A consistent approach to managing behaviour.
- An atmosphere that encourages professional development and a willingness to learn and change.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians:

The school expects that you will:

- Be aware of the various policies and codes of the school and the expectation of pupils (See www.scoilrealta.ie).
- Show support for teachers in their implementation of the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Support your child in his school work.
- Check and sign homework.
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of your child.
- Ensure he has the necessary materials and uniform.
- Ensure that he has a substantial, healthy lunch.
- Ensure your child has a positive attitude to and abides by the school and class rules.
- Never undermine the authority of the school or teachers.
- Promote respect for teachers and other school personnel.
- Give a contact number where you can be reached in an emergency.
- Be available to discuss a problem.
- Make an appointment to discuss any concerns.

Your child expects that you will:

- Look after his basic needs.
- Be interested in, support, praise and encourage his work in school.
- Be interested in, support, praise, encourage and check his homework.

School Rules:

The rules outlined in this policy provide clear guidelines for members of our school community. The School Rules are on display throughout the school in a language that pupils understand.

WALK	Red	Safety
BE NICE	Green	Respect
TELL THE TRUTH	Yellow	Communication
WORK HARD	Blue	Learning
UNIFORM	Green	Respect

Rewards:

Rewarding good behaviour is a very important part of our Code of Behaviour and Discipline. The following strategies may be used to reward good behaviour:

- Dalta na seachtaine.
- Positive notes home.
- Praise (in public/private).
- Certificate.
- Homework pass.
- Class reward (e.g. extra time in yard).
- Mention at Assembly.
- Golden Time.

Restorative Practices:

An important part of our school approach to behaviour is the concept of 'Restorative Practices' (Appendix 1).

Sanctions:

Sanctions are used in a corrective way and are intended to help the child to change and improve his behavioural patterns.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Misdemeanours:

The degree of misdemeanours, i.e. level 1, 2 or 3, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

Level 1:

Level 1 Behaviours:

These behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school classroom and common areas, including the school yard.

Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers.
- Running in hallways or classrooms.
- Disturbing the work of others.

- Disrespectful language, tone or manner.
- Ignoring staff requests.
- Rough play.
- Not wearing uniform.

Level 1 Disciplinary Actions:

1. Verbal reprimand.
2. Removal from group (time out).
3. Referral to another classroom.
4. Note/line to be signed by parents/guardians.
5. Extra work/detention during lunch time.
6. Verbal communication with parents/guardians.

Level 1 Supportive Interventions:

1. Classroom based interventions.
2. Discussion with the pupil.
3. Communication with parents/guardians.

A record is kept of regular instances of misdemeanour.

Following 5 instances the teacher will contact parents/guardians of the child to discuss behaviour. Teachers communicate with parents sooner rather than later.

- Following this if the child continues with misdemeanours the pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Principal/Deputy Principal meets parents/guardians concerning behaviour.

Level 2:

Level 2 Behaviours:

These behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety of students and staff.

Listed below are some of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. pushing or hitting).
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing.
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability or ethnic origin.
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment.

Level 2 Disciplinary Actions:

1. In school supervised detention.
2. A record is kept of all serious misdemeanours.
3. Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others.
4. Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal.

5. Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parents/guardians.
6. Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school.

Level 2 Supportive Interventions:

1. Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal or Principal.
2. Request for assistance from external agencies such as N.E.P.S., N.C.S.E., C.A.M.H.S.
3. Referral for psychological assessment (with parental/guardian consent).

Level 3:

Level 3 Behaviours:

These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school. Situations which involve illegal activity may result in contact with an Garda Síochána after parents/guardians have been informed.

Listed below are some of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

1. Repeated instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
2. Deliberately vandalizing school property.
3. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil.
4. Bringing alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or matches to school, possession of weapons.

Level 3 Disciplinary Actions:

1. A record is kept.
2. Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parents/guardians.
3. Suspension or expulsion may be considered.

Level 3 Supportive Interventions:

1. Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal or Principal.
2. Request for assistance from outside agencies such as N.E.P.S., N.C.S.E., C.A.M.H.S.
3. Referral for psychological assessment.

Procedures for Suspensions:

Definition of suspension:

‘requiring a student to absent himself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’ (Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools. N.E.W.B.)

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an ‘immediate suspension’ to the Principal Teacher. An immediate suspension may be for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management 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 designated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'automatic suspension' for named behaviours outlined in this policy. An automatic suspension may be for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management the suspension may be for a longer period of time but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board of Management retains its authority to suspend in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension:

An immediate suspension will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of the pupil, other pupils or staff of the school. An 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 of Management the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An automatic suspension is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine, having given due consideration for its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur automatic suspension as a sanction:

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff.
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.
- Leaving the school without permission during the school day.

An automatic suspension may be for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Board of Management the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parents/guardians will be informed of an immediate or automatic suspension by telephone and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstances will a pupil be sent home from school prior to his parents/guardians being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will be issued in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents/guardians.

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an automatic or immediate suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident, the Board will invite the pupil and his parents/guardians to discuss

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension.
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such conduct.

The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given:

No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

Procedures in regard to Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of immediate or automatic suspension the following procedures will apply:

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed:

A written letter containing the following information will issue to parents/guardians.

1. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
2. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parents/guardians are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or sanction is imposed.

The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given:

1. 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.
2. The person/persons involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parents/ guardians and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reason for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents/guardians.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will provide the information on the submission of such an appeal.

Expulsion:

Definition of Expulsion:

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

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 detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal or a nominee of the Board of Management.

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to the parents/guardians:

1. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
2. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parents/guardians are provided with an opportunity to respond.

Where the Principal or Board 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:

1. Inform the parents/guardians that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
2. Ensure that the parents/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.
3. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents/guardians.

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's or nominee's recommendations and the holding of a hearing:

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

The parents/guardians will be notified in writing:

1. As to the date, location and time of the hearing.
2. Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
3. 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 the parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board of Management gives an undertaking that:

1. The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.
2. The Principal/nominee and the parents/guardians will present their case to the Board in each other's presence.
3. Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party.
4. The parents/guardians may make their case for a lesser sanction if they so choose.

The Board of Management Deliberations and 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:

1. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
2. 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.
3. Will in writing notify the parents/ guardians of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted.
4. Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Educational Welfare Officer.
5. 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.

Confirmation of the Decision to Expel:

Where the 20 day period following the 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 will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parents/guardians 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 Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with the information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given:

1. 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.
2. The persons involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent themselves from the decision making process.

Notification of a Child's Absence from School:

Parents/guardians should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence:

- 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 should be certified (i.e. absences longer than 10 days).

The school will inform the Educational Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 days or more in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register.

Records:

A standardised record system 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 parents/guardians 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 Acts 1998 to 2018 and the EU General Data Personal Regulation (GDPR).

Success Criteria (by which the Policy will be judged):

- Atmosphere of discipline within the school.
- Children are aware of school rules.
- Staff apply school rules.
- Growth in self-discipline.
- Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code.
- Comments or compliments on behaviour.
- Children working to the best of their ability.
- Class working to the best of their ability.
- Improvements in behaviour.

Monitoring and Review:

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policies. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The Principal is

responsible for monitoring and reviewing policy at staff level on an annual basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The Board of Management will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and The Anti -Bullying Policy is reviewed yearly or more often if need arises.

In registering children in Scoil Réalta na Maidine parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school. A copy of all policies and procedures is available for view by all parents.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine.

Signed:  Date: 15/01/19

Chairperson, Board of Management

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The contents of this policy have been approved by St. Senan's Education office, acting on behalf of the Patron.

Appendix 1

Restorative Practices:

Pupils are expected firstly to respect themselves and then to treat each other and staff members with respect. Teachers and staff members are expected to treat children with respect. We take the view that pupils (other than some pupils with special needs) choose their behaviour to a large degree – they always have an alternative. Therefore, they must take responsibility for their behaviour. If they treat others poorly, they may be acting out their own anger and frustrations, but they can also learn to choose differently and more positively. We ask children to treat others as they want to be treated themselves.

Rules of Anger:

It's ok to be angry.

When I become angry:

- I don't hurt others.
- I don't hurt myself.
- I don't damage property.
- I talk about how I feel.

Mending Relationships:

If I become angry and hurt someone with my words or actions, I must try to make things right. I will do this by talking with the person I hurt, and I must be prepared to offer an apology, and I must be prepared to guarantee that I will not hurt that person again. I must try to realise myself what it feels like to be hurt with words or actions and I must try to recognise the damage that my poor behaviour can do to others. In this way, I help myself to mend and I help my victim to mend.

What does 'Restorative Practice' mean in Scoil Réalta na Maidine:

Restorative Practice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and to put things right.

Key Skills of Restorative Discipline are:

- Active listening.
- Facilitating dialogue and problem solving.
- Listening to and expressing emotion.
- Supporting others in taking ownership of problems.

Fair Process:

'Individuals are most likely to trust and co-operate freely with systems, whether they themselves win or lose by those systems, when fair process is observed.'

- Expectations – everyone knows what is expected of them.
- Engagement – involves individuals in decisions/listens to views.
- Explanations – clarify how decisions are reached.

People who have been harmed need:

- Someone to listen to my story.
- Time to calm down.
- A chance to ask – ‘why me? ‘What did I do to deserve that?’
- The person concerned to understand and acknowledge the impact their behaviour has had on me.
- A sincere spontaneous apology.
- Things put right, if possible.
- Reassurance that it won’t happen again.

Offenders are asked the following questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you need to make things right?

Group Conference may be held if deemed appropriate:

- Offenders tell what they did.
- Everyone talks about what impact this has had on them.
- The group reaches a shared understanding of the harm that has been done.
- The group negotiates an agreement about how to repair the damage and minimise further harm.