



Kilgarriffe National School, Old Timoleague Road, Desert, Clonakilty, Co, Cork

Roll No: 10499U Tel: 023 8834965/083 0658096

Email: kilgarriffens.office@gmail.com Web: www.kilgarriffens.ie

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

Kilgarriffe National School recognises that effective behaviour management in a school depends on the support, co-operation and example of parents, guardians and school staff. This Code of Behaviour was written to guide the effective management of behaviour, using *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School (NEWB)*.

Rationale and Mission Statement

Our school motto is *Space to Learn, Play and Grow*. We aim to provide a safe and happy school environment where children and adults work together to create an atmosphere where everyone can thrive.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set high expectations regarding the behaviour of our pupils
- Create a positive and orderly environment for teaching and learning in which pupils' self-esteem and self-discipline is developed
- Develop a proper sense of social behaviour and school discipline where a caring attitude towards others and tolerance of difference is encouraged
- Show regard for the safety, health and well-being of all pupils, staff and visitors to Kilgarriffe National School
- Outline predictable and consistent sanctions where necessary

Promoting Good Behaviour

Teachers and other school staff will adopt a positive and pro-active approach to discipline, with a greater emphasis being placed on rewards than on sanctions.

Strategies we use to promote and reward positive behaviour include:

- Encouraging a sense of belonging to the school community
- Modelling and explicitly teaching respectful language and behaviour
- Developing empathy through teaching good listening skills, perspective taking and discussing the feelings of others
- Building self-esteem by providing opportunities for each child to succeed and “shine”
- Providing an effective curriculum that is differentiated when needed
- Providing lots of opportunities for collaborative learning and teamwork
- Providing opportunities for older children to mentor and support younger children e.g. buddy reading
- A quiet word or gesture from a teacher to show approval
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A positive comment on children’s work
- Sharing achievements with other classes and teachers
- A message to a parent to acknowledge good behaviour
- Celebrating birthdays and achievements at assembly
- Use of class reward systems e.g. Kindness Box, Marble Jar, sticker charts, golden time
- A treat e.g. extra play time, cooking time, a night off homework
- Award certificates presented in weekly assembly

Strategies parents and guardians may use to promote positive behaviour include:

- Modelling respectful language and behaviour at home
- Developing empathy through talking about the feelings and perspectives of others
- Building self-esteem by helping your child to identify their strengths and celebrating their achievements
- Nurturing a positive attitude towards school
- Taking an interest in your child’s schoolwork and homework
- Ensuring your child attends school regularly and punctually with the correct uniform and materials required

Behaviours Expected

The expectations and rules stated in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are the responsibility of the school. These include school outings and special events.

In our school, we will:

- **Be Gentle** – We don’t hurt others and do our best to keep everyone safe.
- **Be Kind and Helpful** – We care for each other and try not to hurt other people’s feelings.
- **Listen** – We listen to the teacher and others.
- **Be Honest** – We tell the truth.
- **Work Hard** – We try our best in all we do.
- **Look after Property** – We don’t waste or damage things or take things that don’t belong to us.

Classroom Rules

Each classroom devises a behavioural contract at the beginning of the school year, which everyone agrees to adhere to. This contract will be age-appropriate and based on the above expectations.

School Rules

- The school doors open at 8.55am and lessons begin at 9.15am. Children should arrive to school during this time. The school accepts no responsibility for the safety of children arriving before 8.55am.
- School finishes at 2.00pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 3.00pm for all other classes. Pupils should be collected promptly.
- Children may only leave the school premises with permission from a teacher or parent/guardian.
- Children should wear school uniform each day – named green school sweatshirt, white polo shirt and black, navy or dark denim trousers/skirt/leggings. Black, navy or dark denim shorts are permitted during the summer term.
- Personal electronic equipment such as phones or smartwatches that call, message, take photos or record audio/video are generally not permitted in school or on school trips. Exceptions to this are made on a case by case basis e.g. for medical needs or if a parent wishes their child to have such a device for travelling to and from school by themselves. In these cases, permission should be sought from the school and an agreement will be made about the storage of the device during the school day.
- Attendance – In the case of all absences, parents/guardians must inform the school of the reason for the absence. This is done through Aladdin. The school is legally obliged to submit attendance reports to TUSLA, under Section 21 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Behaviour Not Accepted by the School

The seriousness of a misdemeanour will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal, based on a common-sense approach and taking into account the age of the child and frequency of such misdemeanours. Repeated incidents of minor misdemeanours will then be considered serious.

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

- Speaking out of turn
- Making inappropriate or rude comments
- Use of inappropriate language
- Distracting others from learning
- Not completing homework
- Failure to wear correct school uniform
- Engaging in dangerous/rough play

Examples of serious misdemeanours:

- Bullying of any kind (including cyber bullying outside of school day) – see Anti-Bullying Policy
- Physical or verbal aggression towards others
- Stealing
- Leaving the school without permission

- Wilful or malicious damage to property
- Refusal to co-operate with teacher's instructions
- Inappropriate use of IT according to the schools Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Possession of illegal or dangerous substances
- Sexual gestures or comments

Strategies for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

It is our school's policy to adopt a problem-solving approach in relation to unacceptable behaviour. This will involve gathering information by talking with the child involved, other children, members of staff and parents. This will help us to understand the context and the factors that may be causing the inappropriate behaviour. Staff will focus on the behaviour, not the child, as the problem.

Sanctions

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

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

A sanction may also:

- Reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- Signal to other pupil and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected

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

- Prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- Keep the child, or other children or adults, safe

Sanctions such as the following may be used:

- Reprimands and reasoning with the child, explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable
- Separation from peers/friends
- Referral to the Principal
- Loss of privileges
- Additional work/homework
- 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 and as outlined in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (NEWB, 2008))

Roles & Responsibilities

Responsibilities of school staff:

- All teachers are responsible for addressing unacceptable behaviour when noticed.
- Support teachers and SNAs will help children with special educational needs to understand and co-operate with school/classroom rules.
- Class teachers are responsible for notifying the Principal of repeated minor misdemeanours and all serious misdemeanours.

- Class teachers are responsible for notifying parents of repeated minor misdemeanours and all serious misdemeanours.
- Teachers are responsible for identifying when it is necessary to plan and implement an Individual Behaviour Plan for a pupil.

Responsibilities of parents and guardians:

- Parents are responsible for notifying class teachers of concerns they have regarding their own child's behaviour.
- Parents are responsible for informing class teachers of external factors that may cause their child to behave inappropriately.
- Parents are responsible for notifying class teachers if another child has behaved inappropriately towards their child.
- Parents are responsible for reinforcing behaviour when misdemeanours are brought to their attention.

Responsibilities of the Board of Management:

- The Board of Management has a role in supporting the work of the staff, of reviewing the policy and in dealing with suspensions and/or expulsions should the need arise.
- As part of our Code of Behaviour, the Board of Management is required to outline procedures for suspension (Appendix A) and expulsion (Appendix B).

Review, Ratification and Communication

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16th September, 2024. It will be reviewed regularly. Feedback from parents throughout the year will be kept and used during the review.

The policy is posted on our school website. Parents are required to sign to indicate their acceptance of the Code of Behaviour on application for a place in the school.

Signed: Trevor Sweetnam

Date: 16/9/24

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Clodagh Nicholson

Date: 16/9/24

Principal/ Secretary, Board of Management

APPENDIX A

Suspension

Suspension is requiring a pupil to absent him/herself for a specified limited period of school days. During a suspension, the pupil retains his/her place in the school.

Authority to Suspend

For serious misbehaviour or continuous misbehaviour, pupils may be suspended by the Principal for a maximum of three days. Internal or external suspension will be at the discretion of the Principal. This period may be extended at the discretion of the Board of Management. (B.O.M.)

Suspension may occur when:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The pupils continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension

Suspension as part of a Behaviour Plan

Suspension should:

- Enable the school to set behaviour goals with the pupil and parents/guardians
- Give the school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on the pupil and parents/guardians seriousness of behaviour

Procedures in respect of suspension

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the school should:

- Inform the pupil and parents/guardians about the complaint by phone followed by a letter (writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having let the parent/guardians know what their child is alleged to have done).
- Give the pupil and parents/guardian an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

Appeals

The B.O.M. should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision.

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal should notify pupil and parents/guardian in writing of decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- Period of suspension and dates when suspension will begin and end
- The reason for suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- Arrangements for returning to school
- Commitment by pupil and parents/guardian to follow the code of behaviour
- The provision for an appeal to the B.O.M.
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills

Re-integrating the Student

The pupil should be given the opportunity and support to a fresh start. The school should expect the same behaviour of this pupil as all other pupils.

Records and Reports

Formal written records should be kept of:

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

The Principal should report all suspensions to the B.O.M. with the reasons for and the duration of all suspensions. The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the Educational Welfare Services Tusla – Child & Family Agency guidelines.

APPENDIX B

Expulsion

A pupil is expelled from school when the Board of Management (B.O.M.) makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school. The B.O.M. has the authority to expel a pupil. As a matter of best practice that authority should be reserved to the B.O.M. and should not be delegated.

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step and should only be taken by the B.O.M. in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and avoid expulsion by:

- Meeting with parent/pupil to try and find ways to change behaviour
- Making sure parents/pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour if it persists
- Ensuring all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies

Grounds for Expulsion

- The pupil's presence constitutes a significant threat to safety
- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in school
- Sexual assault

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. *A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.*

The Principal should:

- Inform pupil/parents of the alleged misbehaviour in writing, how it will be investigated and that it could lead to expulsion
- Give pupil/parent every opportunity to respond to the complaint before decision is made and before sanction is imposed

2. *A recommendation to the B.O.M. by the Principal that expulsion may be warranted.*

The Principal should:

- Inform pupil/parents in writing that the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion
- Ensure parents have records of the allegations against the pupil, the investigation and written notice of the grounds on which B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the B.O.M. with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents
- Notify the parents of the date of hearing by the B.O.M. and invite them to the meeting
- Advise parents they can make written and oral submission to the B.O.M
- Ensure parents have enough notice to allow them prepare for the hearing

3. *Consideration by the B.O.M. of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.*

At the hearing the Principal and parents put their case to the Board in each other's presence and should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.

4. *The B.O.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing.*

If expulsion is recommended the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing and give reasons for this opinion. Pupil cannot be expelled for 20 days. The Board should inform parents about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

5. *Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.*

Within 20 days of notification from the B.O.M. the Educational Welfare Office must

- Make reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, parents and pupil and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend to ensure arrangements are made for the pupil to continue in education.

6. *Confirmation of the decision to expel.*

When 20 days have elapsed following notification of the Education Welfare Officer and the B.O.M. still agree that the pupil should be expelled the pupil's parents should be notified immediately. The parents and pupil should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel a pupil.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. An appeal may also be brought by the Educational Welfare Services Tusla – Child & Family Agency guidelines on behalf of the pupil.