



Behaviour Policy

NB This is a translation of the original Irish Document

All references will be taken from the wording of the Irish document

Introductory Statement

Gaelscoil Sáirséal aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. This policy on behaviour was formulated to promote good behaviour in the school in order to ensure a safe and happy learning environment in which the school can function in an ordered and harmonious approach. If the basic principle of this policy is applied effectively and if the rules of the school are adhered to it will benefit the children, teachers and parents of the school.

Aims

- to enable the children to achieve their potential in all aspects of their development in an enjoyable and safe learning environment.
- to foster respect and understanding for one another and adults in the children
- to ensure children respect positive behaviour and are responsible for their own actions
- to ensure the safety of all members of the school community
- to implement a system of rules, rewards and sanctions/strategies

Ethos

Gaelscoil Sáirséal fosters freedom based on the principles of fairness and a sense of belonging. It is hoped that staff, parents and children will co-operate with each other to ensure that each child has the opportunity to achieve their potential in a caring environment that values the uniqueness and talents of every child.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Is it our responsibility to establish a positive school ethos. A positive ethos in all aspects of the school aids a strong sense of social integration. In our school, all children are treated with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, children, parents and all are in agreement that the focus will be on promoting positive behaviour and the acknowledgement of this behaviour.

Through the use of the SPHE curriculum, to support the code of behaviour, we aim to assist our children in developing communication, appropriate interaction and behaviour and conflict resolution skills. This programme also emphasises the need to foster self respect and enable the children to accept differences and develop citizenship.

The Board of Management supports the principal and school staff in the implementation of a fair code of behaviour and discipline. Consultation with the BOM took place during the drafting of this policy. The BOM will also be consulted with when this policy is reviewed. The BOM supports the school staff when serious violations of behaviour occur.

Parents

Parental support is vital to ensure the achievement of appropriate expectations regarding behaviour and discipline in the school. Co-operation between parents and staff is encouraged to implement the policy. Parents are part of the drafting and reviewing phase of this policy, however, the Board of Management has the final authority regarding amendments from parents.

Prior to the enrolment of a student in the school a copy of the school's code of behaviour is provided and parents of the child are requested to ratify in writing that they accept the policy and will endeavour to ensure their child will fulfil the requirements of the code of discipline.

Parents support the school in promoting good behaviour and in establishing a high standard of behaviour. They are aware of and co-operate with the reward systems and sanctions in place in the school. They ensure children are in school in time and attend school regularly. They attend meetings in school when requested. They assist children when completing homework and ensure it is completed to the best of the child's ability. Parents ensure that their children have all books and other important items.

Children do not have permission to leave the school at any time without a written note from their parent or guardian. In the case of early collection, parents must report directly to the secretary's office and she will inform the class teacher. Children from First Class to Sixth Class do not need to be accompanied to their classrooms. It is advised that parents from First Class to Sixth Class leave their children at the school door. If a child is late a note should be written into the child's diary. Parents are requested not to enter the classroom to explain to the class teacher as this disrupts class work.

Record Keeping

In accordance with the school policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, the classteacher keeps an account regarding student behaviour. The accounts are written in an impartial, factual manner. Reference is made during parents / teachers meetings to children's behaviour. Parents are informed of any behaviour issues. Reference to children's behaviour is also made in the school report at the end of the year.

Staff members supervising the yard also keep records of misbehaviour. The class teacher, the teacher on supervision duty and the principal are kept informed of incidents that occur in the school yard. All staff understand clearly the rules of the yard which ensures coherence regarding the implementation and adherence to these rules.

Procedures for reporting children's absence to the school

Parents must inform the school of any child's absence/non-attendance from school and the reason for this absence. Letters are written to the class teacher and these letters are filed by the class teacher in his/her classroom. Parents are requested to date these letters which remain in the classroom until the end of the school year.

In a desire to encourage a high standard of attendance:

- An inspiring and attractive school and learning environment is created.
- A percentage of class attendance is calculated at the end of the month and mentioned to the children.
- Recognition is given to any child with full attendance at the end of each term.
- An award is given to any child with full attendance at the end of the school year.
- Parents are informed of the Education (Welfare) Act and its implications.
- The school fulfils its statutory obligations to the National Education Welfare Board by forwarding regular information regarding the non-attendance of children.

Positive Strategies in Managing Behaviour

The Classroom

Various strategies are used to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom. The most effective methodology teachers develop in managing challenging behaviour is prevention. Primary rules exist in each classroom that co-inside with the ethos mentioned in the code of discipline and create a positive learning environment. Students have an input into the formation of classroom rules. Classroom management techniques, activities and motivating methodologies are used to maintain the interest and motivation of the children. Teachers ensure that the children understand the expected level of behaviour in class and are regularly reminded of same.

A student of the week award 'Dalta na Seachtaine' is awarded in every class each week to give recognition to good behaviour.

The School Yard

Clear rules in the school yard emphasise good behaviour and ensure a clear understanding of the activities permissible in the school yard. A teacher is always on supervision duty during recess. Special Education Needs assistants also provide assistance to the supervising teacher. Effort is made to organise activities (for example marbles) to reduce misbehaviour. Sections have been created in the yard, to provide particular areas for various age groups. Children stay in their classrooms on wet days. Children go to the toilet before the class teacher goes to the staff room and the teacher sets an art task for the children to complete. One teacher is in charge of the classes. When the class teacher is not in the room students must remain in their seats, working quietly without disrupting other children. If the children need anything they must ask the teacher in charge.

The teacher on supervision duty will address the misbehaviour of any child violating the rules of the yard. The children will be given a 'time out' depending on the severity of the incident. Child's name and a note of the incident may be written in the 'leabhar dearg'. The class teacher will be informed of the incident by the supervising teacher and may decide to remove certain privileges as they see fit.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

The following strategies are in place if a student misbehaves or refuses to follow the standards expected by the school. Teachers and/or the principal will judge the level of the misdemeanour in a sensible approach taking the seriousness and frequency of any misdemeanours into account.

The following strategies are in place to respond to unacceptable misbehaviour:

- Reasoning with the student
- If a child misbehaves in the yard he/she will receive a 'time out'

- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Loss of privileges
- Keep them back at break times
- Be given extra work
- Communication with parents
- Referral to principal
- Suspension (See Paragraph 5 regarding Suspension)

Class teachers will use the above strategies should misbehaviour occur. Firstly, the class teacher will caution the child and/or give council. If misbehaviour occurs in the case of another teacher / the principal in charge / supervising the class, the class teacher or principal will follow the same procedures.

In the event of a serious misbehaviour or misbehaviour occurring on a regular basis, the class teacher will contact the parents. Parents will be kept informed of any serious misbehaviour from the beginning. A note will be written by the class teacher in the student's school journal or a telephone call will be made to the parents and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the child's behaviour.

The misbehaviour will be discussed and efforts made to establish strategies to ensure co-operation between parents / guardians and the class teacher in order to manage the behaviour. In the case where improvement is not made and a child continues to break the school rules, the class teacher will liaise with the principal. The principal and class teacher / teacher with a post of responsibility will contact the parents to discuss the behaviour again. Efforts will be made to establish a satisfactory solution in order to improve the student's behaviour. If this does not result in improved behaviour the principal will liaise with the school's Board of Management.

Procedures for Suspension / Expulsion

The procedures below must be followed before a student can be suspended or expelled from the school.

Suspension

A child can be suspended if serious misbehaviour continuously occurs. The following are examples of serious misbehaviour.

- Continuous violation of school rules or class rules
- Continuous irritation of another child

- If a child bullies another child / or other children
- If a child expresses serious disrespect for a teacher
- In the case of immoral behaviour – (stealing, plundering or harm to others)

An account of all serious misbehaviour that occurs in school is documented. Parents are requested to come to the school to discuss the misbehaviour with the principal and / or the class teacher when deciding on placing a child on suspension. The principal will report in writing any child suspended for more than 6 days to the education welfare officer. The Board of Management have authorised the principal / chairperson of the Board of Management to suspend a child from school for the maximum initial period of three school days (Rule 130, Paragraph 5, Rules of Primary Schools).

Before a child is suspended efforts will be made to manage the misbehaviour. Communication will be made with the parents in relation to the misbehaviour. Parents are invited to the school to discuss the potential suspension. A registered letter is sent to the child's parents / guardians. If the parents do not attend the school at the designated meeting time the child will be suspended until the parents attend the school. All correspondence is also forwarded to the Board of Management. At the meeting parents are requested to give confirmation in writing that their child will make every effort to improve his / her behaviour, conduct him/herself in an appropriate manner in school and adhere to the school rules.

If it is decided to suspend a child for longer than three days, permission must be granted by the Board of Management (Rule 130, Paragraph 5, Rules of Primary Schools).

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion)

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer.' (Paragraph 24(4)). It is the right of the Board of Management without prejudice 'to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured' (Paragraph 24(5)).

Appeals

In accordance with paragraph 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or students who are 18 years of age and older) may appeal, to the secretary General of the Department of Education and Science a decision made by the Board of Management

including (1) permanent exclusion from school and (2) suspension from school for a period of time that would mean the student reaches a period of twenty school days or more on suspension in any school year. An appeal should normally be made within 42 calendar days of the date the parents or student was notified of the decision by the school.

The principal / chairperson shall inform parents / guardians of their right to appeal, in writing to the Board of Management, the decision in relation to suspension or expulsion.

Managing violent and threatening behaviour

The following strategies are in place to respond to serious emotional or behavioural problems. Concerns regarding children displaying emotional difficulties will be discussed with the psychologist and psychological assessments will be completed. Appropriate support will be sought from various services e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, etc. with help from the National Council for Special Education. Classroom assistants will be sought, if appropriate, to help teachers through practice and support to share the management of challenging behaviour.

Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be judged on the following practical indicators:

- Positive behaviour in the classrooms, corridors and school yard
- Continuous implementation of procedures and best practice by class teachers
- Positive feedback from parents / guardians, pupils and teachers
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Each teacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy in his / her class through the SPHE programme.
- The principal, teachers, and special needs assistants are responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of the implementation of the policy.
- It is important that students respect good behaviour. They are responsible for their own behaviour and the promotion of good behaviour in the school.
- The pupils have a very important role to play ensuring that they do not accept or encourage bullying behaviour.
- Each parent / guardian is responsible for following the school's code of behaviour and encouraging their children to adhere to the school rules.

Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed in the Autumn Term every year and will be amended as required.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2007.

School Rules

- Children must respect themselves, the school community and staff and other children.
- Children must speak Irish in the school yard and in the school environment.
- Bad language or cursing will not be tolerated.
- Children must tell the truth at all times.

- No child is allowed to hit, hurt or kick another child, play rough games or be part of any form of bullying.
- Name calling and insulting is not allowed.
- Children must obey class rules and directions.
- Children must obey the rules of the yard. For safety reasons the play area is restricted to inside the yellow line and the children must not run wildly. When the bell rings the children are expected to form a quiet orderly line.
- When on the stairs children must walk quietly, one after the other with a hand on the safety rail and not turn around.
- When coming and going from school under the supervision of a teacher, children must walk quietly and mannerly in a straight line.
- Children should bring a healthy lunch to school. Sweets, chocolate, crisps, fizzy drinks etc are not allowed.
- Children are expected to try their best at school and must not distract other children from their work.
- Children are expected to try their best when completing homework. (See school policy on Homework)
- Children must wear their uniform everyday, the exception being on PE days. If for any reason a child is not wearing the correct uniform parents must provide a written explanation. (See School Uniform Policy)
- Children must not run or shout in the school building. They must take care on the stairs.
- Children are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school. (See School Mobile Phone Policy)
- Children are not permitted to bring substances to school, take them in school or attend school under their influence. (including illegal drugs, tobacco products and alcohol) (See Substance Abuse Policy)