

# **Code of Behaviour of Lough Gur National School**

## **Introductory Statement:**

This policy was drafted by the staff at a School Development planning in-service day and was formulated during the school year 2009-2010.

## **Rationale:**

- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2) , that the code of behaviour shall specify :
  - A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school:
  - B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards:
  - C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned:
  - D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
  - E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.
- To ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools, NEWB, 2008.

## **Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the School.**

The school community will strive to provide a happy, safe, harmonious, inclusive and secure environment where the spiritual, intellectual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all are nurtured.

This will be supported by the objectives of the Code of Behaviour.

## **Aims:**

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- To outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be available to teachers in response to in-appropriate behaviour.

## **Content of the Policy:**

The policy is addressed under the following headings:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour
  - Staff
  - Board of Management
  - Parents
  - Pupils
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour.
  - Classroom
  - Playground
  - Other areas in the school
  - School related activities
4. Rewards and sanctions
  - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
  - Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
  - Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
  - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour.
5. Suspension/Expulsion
  - Suspension
  - Expulsion
  - Appeals
6. Keeping Records
  - Class
  - Playground
  - School records
7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school
8. Reference to other policies.

### **1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school**

-----  
The standards of behaviour should expect all members of the school community (staff, parents, pupils, B.O.M, visitors) to behave in ways that show respect for others. Standards of behaviour should reflect values such as:

- respect for self and others
- kindness and willingness to help others
- courtesy and good manners
- fairness
- readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- forgiveness

The standards should describe the commitment that the school expects from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment might include:

- attending school regularly and punctually
- doing one's best in class
- taking responsibility for one's work
- keeping the rules
- helping to create a safe, positive environment
- respecting staff
- respecting other students and their learning
- participating in school activities

### **Standards signal unacceptable behaviour**

Standards are also a way of signalling to members of the school community the kinds of behaviours that are not acceptable in the school, for example:

- behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- threats or physical hurt to another person
- damage to property
- theft

It is recognised that factors influencing children's behaviour may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated.

Parents of all new entrants to the school will receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour and will be asked to confirm in writing that the said Code of Behaviour has been received and understood by them.

## **2. Whole School Approach in promoting positive behaviour**

---

There are a variety of elements to ensure a whole school approach to positive behaviour and they include:

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony
- A teamwork approach to behaviour
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- An inclusive and involved school community
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy.

**Staff:**

All staff have a role in ensuring that all school policies and practices support the objectives of the Code of Behaviour. This is done through whole staff discussion at staff meetings or informally as the need arises.

All new staff receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour and are supported in its implementation. They are encouraged to participate in all discussions in relation to its continuing development.

In implementing our Code of Behaviour the staff will be aware that it may present challenges for children presenting with behavioural difficulties arising from special educational needs.

Behavioural targets may be included as part of a particular Child's I.E.P. Special efforts will be made to ensure that all children with S.E.N will have the Code of Behaviour explained to them in a manner that they understand. Class teachers, S.N.A 's and resource teachers may be involved in this.

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

The following programmes are also used:

- Alive O
- Drama Curriculum
- Walk Tall
- Circle Time
- Stay Safe

**Board of Management:**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management.... The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies. The Board should play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

The Board of Management participate in the reviewing and drafting of the Code of Behaviour. The B.O.M acknowledges positive behaviour within the school and at various school related functions and events.

The B.O.M. supports the staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour e.g. provision of opportunities for staff development through facilitating attendance at courses, provision of relevant resources etc.

The Board of Management will be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour, this will involve decisions relating to suspension and expulsion. The B.O.M may also be involved in discussions related to behavioural issues in the school.

The Chairperson of the B.O.M together with the principal may meet with parents in certain instances to discuss behavioural issues.

### **Parents:**

Parents of all new entrants to the school will receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour. Parents will be reminded annually to re-visit the Code of Behaviour through notification during the first term. Parents are complimented on their continued support for the Code of Behaviour and are encouraged to continue this at parent – teacher meetings and other informal events. Parents are involved in the formulation and implementation of the Code of Behaviour by the examination of a draft code by a re-presentative committee.

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by the following:

- Parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work.
- Parents are aware of and co-operate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed.
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school

### **Pupils:**

Pupils are involved in the development of the Code of Behaviour by being given opportunities to be involved in the development of school rules.

Pupils play an ongoing part in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour through drafting rules for the classroom on a yearly basis.

### **3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour:**

-----

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of the code. School management and staff will actively foster a school ethos, policies, and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

Positive strategies for managing behaviour will be addressed under the following headings:

- Classroom
- Playground
- General school environs
- School related activities

**Classroom:**

The following positive strategies will be used by the staff to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom.

- “Ground rules”/behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Timetabling.

**Playground:**

The staff will implement positive strategies in the playground to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour. These strategies are outlined in Appendix 1(a).

**General School environs**

The ways in which all staff will contribute to promotion of positive behaviour in the general school environs are outlined in Appendix 1 (b)

**School related activities**

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour will apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. Standards of behaviour expected during school tours, games, extracurricular activities and other school-linked events are outlined in Appendix 1 (c).

**4. Rewards and Sanctions:****Rewards**

Reward systems will be part of an overall school class strategy, or may form part of a planned intervention to help an individual student to manage their own behaviour. The school community will consider and agree any use of reward systems.

Rewards for students with special needs will take account of their particular learning style. In the case of students with a sensory disability, the reward will be communicated in ways that take account of that.

Reward systems within each classroom will follow the general reward system being implemented in the school as outlined in Appendix 2 (a).

## **Sanctions:**

The Board of Management will promote a whole-school approach to the use of sanctions. This approach will provide for:

- clarity about the role and purpose of sanctions
- good practice in the use of sanctions
- the school's duty of care
- Supports for student's with special educational needs.

\*A sanction is a form of positive intervention. A sanction will be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. In particular, a sanction should:

- defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way
- be timely

\* All members of staff will use agreed sanctions in a consistent way.

\* Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour. Decisions about the use of sanctions will distinguish between minor misbehaviour and serious misbehaviour. The view taken about how serious any particular behaviour is will depend on several factors besides the actual behaviour itself. These factors will include:

- the frequency, duration and persistence of the behaviour
- whether it is part of an escalating pattern of poor behaviour
- the context of the behaviour.

Sanctions will be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the student and take account of the cultural background of the student. Sanctions will be sensitive to the particular circumstances of vulnerable individuals or groups of students (for example, a child in care or a child with special educational needs). In order to comply with equality legislation, sanctions will not be used in a manner that discriminates against particular students or group of students.

Please refer to Appendix 2 (b) for examples of sanctions, which may be used by the staff.

\* When the school sanctions are not effective in improving in-appropriate problem behaviour or when a pupil's behaviour is a source of concern parents will be contacted.

\* Where a serious incident or repeated incidents have taken place and where it is deemed (by staff/principal or parents) that bullying behaviour may have occurred, the following steps will be taken.

1. Firstly speak to both parties involved individually in the presence of another teacher (or S.N.A), at the earliest possible opportunity.
2. The questions who, what, when, where and why will be asked. Teacher will take notes during the interview on the responses made by the pupil. These will be kept on file. Where appropriate the pupils involved will be asked to write an account of what happened.
3. If a group is involved each child will be asked for his/her account of what happened.
4. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue at this level. All parties will be brought together, it will be explained to the bully how their behaviour is wrong and how it has affected the other person. An agreement to stop and an apology to the victim will be sought. Depending on the severity of the incident, parents may be informed at this stage.
5. In the event of a resolution not being arrived at, parents of both the victim and bully will be invited to meet with the teacher and/or principal (individually) to discuss the actions to be taken. Sanctions may be applied in line with the schools Code of Behaviour. SPHE lessons, Drama activities, Buddy system, or circle time may be used at classroom level to encourage positive behaviour by all children
6. A follow up meeting/contact will take place after an appropriate time during the particular school year to review progress.
7. If a problem remains unsolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

### **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour.**

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g Health Service Executive, NEPS,....
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the principal may consider immediate suspension.



## **Suspension/Expulsion**

The B.O.M of Lough Gur National School believe that a proposal to exclude a student, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted only by very serious misbehaviour.

Lough Gur National School understand in drafting our Code of Behaviour the legal protections for the individual student's right to education mean that decisions to suspend or expel a student are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court.

The Board of Management and Principal of Lough Gur National School acknowledge/understand their duty to ensure that there are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion.

Great care will be taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence.

### **Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice**

Lough Gur National School is required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the constitution of Ireland, International Conventions and case law.

Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- **the right to be heard**
- **the right to impartiality.**

The **right to be heard** means:

- The right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
- 8. The right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account.
- The right to know how the issue will be decided
- The right to respond to all allegations

F. Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body.

Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts.

The **right to impartiality** means:

- The right to absence of bias in the decision-maker
- The right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making.

Freedom from bias entails ensuring that a person with an interest in the matter is not involved in the investigation or decision-making. If a person has pre-conceived opinions, a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter, they should not attempt to solve that matter.

An impartial process is one that allows a decision to be made based on an unbiased evaluation of information and evidence. Generally, impartiality requires that the investigation is separated from the process of making a decision so that the decision-maker comes to the task with an open mind.

## Applying fair procedures in Lough Gur National School

In Lough Gur National School, fair procedures apply to:

- The **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and
- The process of **decision-making** as to (A) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (B) what sanction to impose.

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in Lough Gur National School.

The **principles** of fair procedures always apply, but the degree of formality required in implementing fair procedures will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and on the seriousness of the possible sanction. The level of formality required, for example for a suspension of fewer than three days, would be less than required in the case of a longer suspension or in circumstances that might lead to an expulsion.

The **right to be heard** means that a student and their parents are fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter; and that they must be given an opportunity to respond to all allegation **before** a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

## Involving the Gardaí

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The Juvenile Liaison Officer can be a significant source of support and advice for the school and the student.

# **Suspension**

## **Suspension is defined as:**

requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days. During the period of a suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

## **Authority to suspend**

The Board of Management of Lough Gur National School has the authority to suspend a student:

## **The grounds for suspension**

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student from Lough Gur National School requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on 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.

## **Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan**

Suspension should be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension should:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with their student and their parents
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

## **Forms of Suspension**

There are different forms of suspension. These include immediate suspension and automatic suspension.

### **Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances the chairperson or the principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

### **' Automatic' suspension**

The Board of Management has decided as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, Parents, Teachers and

Students, that the following named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

- The student's behaviour is a cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for damage to property.

### **Other forms of suspension include:**

#### **Rolling suspension:**

In Lough Gur National School a student will not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:

- They engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and
- Fair procedures are observed in full and
- The standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

### **Lough Gur National School will not engage in informal or unacknowledged suspension as defined in the guidelines.**

In Lough Gur National School students will not be suspended for an indefinite period.

### **Procedures in respect of suspension.**

When a suspension is considered we in Lough Gur National School will follow fair procedures.

These procedures involve:

- Informing the student and their parents about the complaint
- Giving parents and student an opportunity to respond.

#### **How Lough Gur National School will inform the students and parents.**

- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing.

### **Parents and students of Lough Gur National School will be given an opportunity to respond to suspension.**

Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

A meeting with the student and their parents will provide an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It will also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour.

## **Procedures in relation to immediate suspension**

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from school without notifying parents.

## **The Period of suspension**

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management will provide guidance to the principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspension of longer than three days might be approved.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, The Board of Management may wish to authorise the principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

## **Appeals**

The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal a decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management, an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

## **Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and should be given information about how to appeal.

## **Implementing the suspension**

### **Written notification**

The B.O.M will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- The period 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 student and their parents ( for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science ( Education Act 1998, section 29)

### **Grounds for removing a suspension.**

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it may be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **After the suspension ends.**

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

### **Clean Slate**

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

### **Review of use of suspension**

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

# Expulsion

A student will be expelled from Lough Gur National School when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.

## Authority to Expel

The Board of Management of Lough Gur National School has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority will be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

## The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, our school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

## **Forms of Expulsion**

### **' Automatic' expulsion**

The Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction.

### **Expulsion for a first offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management in Lough Gur N.S. forms the opinion that a student will be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault.

## **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

Lough Gur National School will follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. 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.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.



## **Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal**

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

## **Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents 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
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

## **Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing**

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

#### **Step 4: 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 student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24 (1)). The Board of Management will refer to National Education Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Board receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Education Welfare Officer.

#### **Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer**

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Education Welfare Officer will:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, section 24).

#### **Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel**

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

## **Appeals**

A parent, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

### **The appeals process**

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science).

### **Review of use of expulsion**

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

## **6. Keeping Records.**

Records will be kept of inappropriate behaviour at the discretion of the staff in line with data protection legislation. Records will be written in a factual and impartial manner.

An incident book will be used within each classroom to record incidents that take place during the class.

Incidents that occur during break times will be recorded in a general school incident book by the person on supervision duty.

### **1. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school.**

-----

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify , “ *the procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.*” Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence.

The following strategies are used to encourage school attendance:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment.

- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils.
- Adapting the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

**Parents/guardians must send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes must be signed and dated. Notes are kept for the duration of the school year. The school will use the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board.**  
 ( see forms on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie))

If any pupil is absent in excess of 20 school days the principal must forward a report to the Education Welfare Board and parents will be informed of same.

## **8. Reference to other Policies**

-----

The following policies may have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour:

- SPHE
- Anti-bullying
- Harassment
- Enrolment
- Record Keeping
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs

### **Success Criteria.**

The success of the policy will be indicated by:

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Management and staff of the school will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the code of behaviour. Parents will familiarise themselves with the policy and support its implementation. Pupils will be encouraged to adhere to the code of behaviour at all times.

**Implementation Date:**

The code of behaviour will be implemented as and from the start of the school year 2010-2011.

**Timeframe for Review**

The policy will be reviewed annually and if necessary amended.

**Ratification and communication:**

The code of behaviour has been ratified by the Board of Management and will be distributed to the parent body in September 2010. Thereafter parents of all new entrants will receive a copy on enrolment. The parent body will be reminded annually to re-familiarise itself with the code of behaviour.

### **Appendix 1 (a)**

#### **Rules in the playground – Lough Gur**

- The playground is for the enjoyment of all the children. Indisciplined, over-robust or bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Bad language will not be tolerated.
- The playground is to be kept clean and tidy. Food is not allowed outside and must be eaten before children go out at breaktimes.
- Children are not allowed to play on the grass in wet weather. ( at the discretion of the staff)
- Pupils will line up at the appointed place when the bell rings for the end of break and will walk into the classroom on the instruction of staff.
- Pupils will follow the instructions of the person on supervision duty at all times.
- Pupils must seek permission to leave the yard from the person on supervision duty.
- Pupils may not go outside the school boundaries under any circumstances for any reason without prior permission from a member of staff.

This is not a definitive list.

### **Appendix 1 (b)**

#### **Rules in the school environs – Lough Gur**

- Pupils will assemble in a line outside the school doors when they arrive in school each morning and remain there in an orderly manner until the school is opened. They will then enter the school in an orderly manner.
- Pupils will respect school property at all times.
- Other children's property will not be interfered with.
- The school environs will be kept tidy. Litter bins are to be used at all times.
- Toilet areas and corridors must be kept clean and tidy and are not to be used as play areas

Rules listed in appendix 1 (a) are also applicable here.

This is not a definitive list.

### **Appendix 1 (C)**

Rules for school related activities:

- Pupils will behave in an orderly manner
- Pupils will have respect for others at all times
- Pupils will respect others property at all times
- Pupils will obey and follow all instructions given by staff or any other person in a supervisory capacity with authority from the school staff.
- Bad language will not be tolerated
- Chewing gum is not allowed.

This is not a definitive list.

## Rewards Appendix 2 (a)

- Traffic lights
- Star charts
- Students of the week
- Star Copy
- Carrying out a useful task in the school
- Sweets on Friday
- Golden time
- Verbal praise and affirmation
- Merit – stickers/certs
- Night off written homework.

## Sanctions

### Appendix 2 (b)

- verbal reprimand
- removal from the group (in class)
- withdrawal of privileges
- withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group
- detention
- formal report to the Board of Management

This is not a definitive list.

### Appendix 3 (a)

#### Other general school rules - Lough Gur

1. Children are expected to be punctual at all times
2. Pupils are expected to follow their teacher's code of discipline, which will follow the general code within the school. Pupils are required to respect the rights of other pupils in the classroom. Therefore, disrespectful behaviour, disruptive practices, bullying of other children, foul language and generally not co-operating with standard class procedures will not be accepted. Disruption of classwork is a breach of discipline, e.g laughing, talking, inattentiveness during class etc.
3. General hygiene should be encouraged at all times. Regular checking of hair is essential to prevent head lice.
4. It is advisable that children have a good healthy lunch.
5. Chewing gum is **not allowed**.
6. Children may not receive or make a phone call during school hours. Urgent messages will be passed on by a member of staff.
7. **Homework.** All homework is expected to be done neatly and carefully. Oral work is also expected to be learned. If not, the children will fit it in at some time at the teacher's discretion. If sometimes, it is not possible for a child to do or complete his/her

homework, a written explanation, signed by a parent/guardian is expected. A verbal explanation from a parent/guardian is also satisfactory.

8. Pupils are not allowed unsupervised access to the Internet. Should a child access the Internet without permission from a member of staff or unsupervised this will be considered a serious misdemeanour and will be dealt with accordingly.
9. Pupils are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules laid down by the staff and management of the school.