

Killeshandra National School (C. of I.)

Code of Behaviour

Aims

In our code of discipline we aim to achieve three things:

1. The efficient operation of our school and the structuring of in-class discipline so that there exists an efficient and stimulating learning environment.
2. The maintenance of good order throughout our school and respect for our school environment.
3. The development of self-discipline in pupils based on consideration, respect and tolerance of others.

The Code of Behaviour is available to parents/guardians on the school website. It is communicated to all pupils at the start of each school year and whenever necessary during the year. Parents/guardians are encouraged to read the Code and support its implementation.

Principles

If our school is to achieve a happy, secure environment in which children can develop to their full potential, it is necessary to provide a framework, which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption free environment. The Religious Education programme, Social Personal and Health Education programme and the example of parents/guardians and teachers all help to encourage positive behaviour in our school. Our school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than sanctions, and the idea is that pupils will acquire self-discipline.

There are times however when it may be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order and to discourage offenders. We recognise the importance of a strong sense of community within the school and the existence of a high level of co-operation among teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, parents/guardians, the Board of Management and the Parents' Association.

Behaviour management strategies will take into account the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or behavioural/emotional difficulties. Individualised behaviour plans and supports will be developed in collaboration with parents/guardians, teachers, SEN co-ordinator and relevant specialists if deemed necessary. Staff will adjust expectations and sanctions where appropriate, ensuring all pupils are treated fairly and consistently.

School Rules

If our school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and wisely.

School Rules

Safety: For my safety and the safety of others-

- I should be careful coming to and going from school. At home time I should not leave the school doors until someone comes to collect me or my bus line leaves. When it is time to leave I should walk down the steps carefully.
- I should always walk while in the school building.
- I should remain seated at all times in class and while eating my lunch.
- I should behave in a way, which does not endanger me or others. Rough play is not allowed.
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher.

Caring for myself-

- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my schoolbag, books and copies in good order.
- I should always be in school by 9:10 a.m.
- I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear our complete school uniform every day.
- I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- I should always bring a nutritional lunch, which abides by the principles of our school healthy eating policy. Crisps, fizzy drinks and chewing gum are not permitted.
- I should always do **my best** at school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and completing my homework.

Caring for others-

- I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by being orderly in the class line.
- I should not make fun of or snigger at other pupils or engage in fighting, stealing, kicking and spitting.
- I should stand back and allow adults to walk through doorways before me.
- I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils can learn.
- I should be well behaved and show respect to all people that I meet when I go on tours and outings and during special school activities
- I should always keep my school clean by putting rubbish in the appropriate bins.
- I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.

Other things I should remember-

- I should not use bad language.
- I should go outside at lunch times unless I have a note from my parents to state otherwise.
- I should not wear jewellery to school unless it is a watch or stud earrings.
- I should not bring a mobile phone to school.

This Code of Behaviour applies to pupils while in school and during all school-related activities, including school tours, outings and events where pupils are representing the school.

Strategies

Praise may be given by any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil's copybook.
- A visit to another member of staff for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- Delegating a special responsibility or privilege.
- A word to a parent/guardian, in verbal or written form.

Traffic Lights System

All classrooms implement a Traffic Lights System.

- Green Light (all children begin each day on this light.)
- Poor Choice 1
- Orange Light
- Poor Choice 2
- Red light

Where misbehaviour occurs, the school aims to support pupils to understand the impact of their actions, repair any harm caused and reintegrate positively into the school community.

Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows:

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Temporary separation from peers within the classroom or in another classroom.
- Loss of privileges.
- Pupils completing a written account of their behaviour.
- Time out during break/lunch time or during other activities.
- Prescribing extra work, which may have to be completed during break/lunch time.
- Referral to principal/deputy principal.
- Communication with parents/guardians, through a note, phone call or meeting (if a child refuses to do what they have been asked by the teacher/principal, their parents/guardians may be asked to come directly to the school).
- Daily/weekly report cards.
- Communication with the Board of Management.
- Referral to a specialist for assessment (where appropriate).

- Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88).

Disciplinary measures will take account of a pupil's age, ability, special educational needs and any psychological or behavioural assessments. Staff will seek advice from NEPS or other specialists as required to ensure responses are fair and proportionate.

Procedures

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or principal based on a common-sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours. Pupils with additional needs will have adapted interventions, ensuring that disciplinary measures consider their specific circumstances.

Serious Misbehaviour

Suspension

The Board of Management of Killeshandra N.S. (C. of I.) has delegated this authority to the principal, for periods of up to three days. The BOM has also authorised 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. The BOM has placed a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. A decision to suspend will be taken only in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Immediate Suspension

The Board of Management of Killeshandra N.S. (C. of I.) authorises the school principal to impose immediate suspensions in exceptional circumstances. Immediate suspension may be warranted in cases such as:

- The student's own safety is at risk due to her/his behaviour.
- The safety of the other children, staff or visitors to the school is compromised by the student's behaviour.
- The student is unable or unwilling to cease offensive behaviour after repeated requests from the school's teaching staff.
- Teaching and learning is severely interrupted by the student's behaviour.

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. If the principal teacher is of the opinion that a student should be suspended immediately for the reasons of safety, she/he will notify the parents/guardians so that appropriate arrangements may be made for the collection of the student. The student will not be permitted to leave the school on her/his own.

As soon as is practicably possible following the imposition of the period of suspension:

1. The principal, along with another member of staff, will carry out a formal investigation into the incident resulting in a decision being made to suspend the student immediately.
2. The principal will meet with the student's parents/guardians to discuss the incident and offer them an opportunity to respond.
3. The principal teacher will write to the parents/guardians to confirm the following:
 - a. The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
 - b. The reason for the suspension
 - c. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents
 - d. The provision for appeal to the Board of Management
 - e. The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days
 - f. The Tusla / Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be notified if the total number of days reached is six.

The duration of a suspension imposed immediately will not exceed a period of three days. The Board of Management will be notified of all instances of immediate suspension.

Procedures in respect of suspension

The following procedure will be followed before a decision is made to suspend a pupil:

- An investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour. The principal and at least one other adult will be involved in this investigation.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents/Guardians will be given an opportunity to respond.

If a decision is made to suspend a child:

- The principal will notify the parent/guardian in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:
 - The period of 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 the parents/guardians.

- The provision for appeal to the Board of Management.
- The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the Department. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
- Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the Tusla / Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be notified.

Following a period of suspension, the parents/guardians will be required to give a satisfactory undertaking that the child will behave in accordance with the school's code of behaviour and the principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil on her/his return to school. Every effort will be made by the school to support the child in the process of re-integration.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity to make a fresh start on a 'clean slate'.

Records and reports

Formal written record will be kept of:

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

Appeals

Under 29(1)(b) of the Education Act 1998, as amended parents/guardians have the right to appeal this decision and can do so by downloading and completing a section 29 appeal form at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/19941-appeals-against-expulsion-or-suspension-for-a-period-or-periods-totaling-not-less-than-20-school-days-in-a-school-year/#how-to-appeal-if-my-child-has-been-expelled-from-school>. Alternatively, parents/guardians can submit their appeal online and upload the required documentation at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>. A section 29 appeal can be made where the Board of Management suspends a student for a period or periods totalling not less than 20 school days in a school year. The section 29 appeal must be made no later than 42 calendar days from the date of the last confirmed suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to a student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student will only occur in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student 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 assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community 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.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the school's Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should 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 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

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

Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This will also ensure that parents/guardians are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents/guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged behaviour.

Parents/Guardians and the student will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents/guardians will occur. It will provide the student and their parents/guardians with an opportunity 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 may also provide an opportunity for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

If the pupil and their parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write to the parents/guardians advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of school authorities to make a decision to respond to inappropriate behaviour. The school will keep a copy of the letter written to parents/guardians in the pupil file.

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:

1. Inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
2. Ensure that 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 parents/guardians
4. Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
5. Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
6. Ensure that parents/guardians 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

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberation (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will 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/guardians put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents/Guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

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

Step 4 – Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate action.

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 Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 24(1)). The Board of Management will refer to the Tusla Education Support Service procedures for proposed expulsions. The pupil will not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 24(1)).

An appeal against an expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended, will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion.

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

Step 5 – Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a pupil should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents/guardians 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).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the pupil to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. In the interests of educational welfare of the student, those concerned will come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

Pending these consultations about the pupil's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of the pupils is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a pupil during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is a likelihood 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 students or staff.

Step 6 - Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification of the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel. This task will be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal. Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will proceed. The pupil and their parents/guardians will be informed about the right to appeal and will be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge the appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student and stored on the student file. The decision will also be recorded in Board of Management minutes.

Appeals

Under 29(1)(a) of the Education Act 1998, as amended parents/guardians have the right to appeal this decision and can do so by downloading and completing a section 29 appeal form at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/19941-appeals-against-expulsion-or-suspension-for-a-period-or-periods-totaling-not-less-than-20-school-days-in-a-school-year/#how-to-appeal-if-my-child-has-been-expelled-from-school>. Alternatively, parents/guardians can submit their appeal online and upload the

required documentation at <https://www.section29appeals.gov.ie/>. A section 29 appeal must be made no later than 42 calendar days from the date of the confirmation to expel by the board of management.

The Board of Management will review the Code of Behaviour on a regular basis, and specifically in any case where a suspension or expulsion has taken place, to ensure it remains fair, consistent and compliant with current legislation and best practice.

Ratification and Communication

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Killeshandra N.S.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

