

*Positive
Code of
Behavior
Cahir N.S*



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1. Introduction

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of *Cahir National School* has prepared and made available a Positive Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; and
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Positive Code of Behaviour of *Cahir National School* has been developed in accordance with 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

2. Policy Formulation

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- I. PARENTS AND STAFF WERE INFORMED THAT AN INITIAL DRAFT OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR WAS AVAILABLE AND WERE EMAILED THE COPIES OF IT. THEY WERE INVITED TO MAKE SUBMISSIONS ON THE CONTENT OF THE CODE WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIMEFRAME.**
- II. CLASS TEACHERS WERE REQUESTED TO DISCUSS THE TOPIC OF 'RULES' WITH THEIR CLASSES AND SUBMIT A LIST OF PUPILS SUGGESTIONS TO THE PRINCIPAL.**
- III. THE INITIAL DRAFT OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR WAS REVIEWED AND WHERE APPROPRIATE AMENDED IN-LINE WITH THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED.**
- IV. THE FINALISED DRAFT OF THE POLICY WAS SUBMITTED FOR THE PATRON'S APPROVAL.**

3. Aims & Objectives of the Code

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- 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 school staff, 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.

4. Whole School Approach

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING CONSISTENT VALUES, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND RELATIONSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR. SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT MAY ONLY BE FORMED BY INVOLVING THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND IN THIS RESPECT THE BOARD ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLES PLAYED BY, THE PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS, ANCILLARY STAFF AND PARENTS IN THE REVIEW AND OPERATION OF THE CODE.

5. Standards of Behaviour

5.1 Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to

- be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- do his/her best both in school and for homework.

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
- work – to the best of his/her ability
- value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- follow – the direction of his/her teacher
- obtain – his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom
- respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

Playground (Playing Pitches) Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- remain – on school grounds at all times
- obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling

Behaviour in other School Areas

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk – in the school corridors
- respect- the toilets and wet areas

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow – his/her teacher's directions at all times
- remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- observe – the rules of general good behaviour

Official School Rules

There are seven official school rules that are in display in each classroom. These are

1. Respect your teacher and listen to others in the class.
2. No running, jumping or horseplay in the classroom or corridor.
3. Use your indoor voice.
4. Put up your hand and wait your turn.
5. Stop and Think
6. Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.

5.2 Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive Behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Model respectful behavior, manners and tone of voice in their interactions with pupils
- Foster an environment that gives each student the best chance of success.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

5.3 Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive Behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

6. Promoting Positive Behaviour

AS A GENERAL RULE THE SCHOOL WILL ENDEAVOR TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IS REINFORCED THROUGH PRAISE AND REWARD. SCHOOL STAFF WILL USE ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE AND GESTURES, BOTH IN CLASS AND AROUND THE SCHOOL, SO THAT POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IS INSTANTLY RECOGNISED AND POSITIVELY REWARDED. SPECIAL ATTENTION WILL BE PAID TO PUPILS WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH POOR BEHAVIOUR SO THAT NOT ONLY GOOD BEHAVIOUR BUT ALSO IMPROVEMENT IN BEHAVIOUR IS ACKNOWLEDGED.

A reward scheme for promoting positive Behaviour will be used. Such rewards will include;

- 'Congratulations' and 'Good News' postcards sent to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Personalised letters to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Special privileges
- Inclusion in a fun activity and intuitive in the school.
- Extra yard time for the class.
- Extra time doing art or drama.
- A system of merit marks.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Stickers
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.

7. Inappropriate Behaviour

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests
- Talking or skipping in the class line.
- Leaving an assigned seat without permission
- Leaving Litter around the school
- Endangering self/fellow pupils in the school yard at break time.

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others e.g. "Time Out Zone" in the yard for the health & safety of pupils
- Prescribing additional work
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact
- Behaviour contract
- Noting instance of yard misbehavior in the yard book.
- Sending to another teacher
- Denial of participation in an activity

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Open Circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.
- "Thinking Time With The Teacher"- (Pupil accompanies the teacher in the yard to discuss the issue)
- Pupil Incident Form (Appendix 2)- An opportunity for the pupil to note the incident that took place and the chance to reflection on his/her actions.
- Pupil writes a letter of apology to the victim/teacher/principal

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)
- Leaving the school without permission during the school day or leaving the care of school staff during school outings.
- Refusal to obey a school rule.(Example Mobile Phone)

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- Report submitted to the Board of Management
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour
- Implementation of extensive Behaviour management plan
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others e.g. "Time Out Zone" in the yard for the health & safety of pupils

LEVEL 2: SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the 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.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).
- Pupil Incident Form (Appendix 2)
- Letter of Apology

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Setting fires
- Deliberately leaving taps on or deliberate destruction to a school.
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Suspension from school for one to five days:**
This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.
- **Suspension from school for five to ten days:**
This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.
- **Expulsion:**
Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

8. Procedures for Suspensions & Expulsions

8.1 Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of *Cahir National School* has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an 'Immediate Suspension' to the Principal Teacher. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the

specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of *Cahir National School* having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

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

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

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of *Cahir N.S.* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

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

Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of *Cahir N.S.* will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- i. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled **no later than 5 school days** from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of Cahir National School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- ii. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- iii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

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

8.2 Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion:

'A student is expelled from a school when a 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.'

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Expel:

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

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- iii. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- iv. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than **5 school days** from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond

- b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ii. ensure that parent(s)/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
- iii. provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)

- c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

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

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- i. as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- iv. the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose

d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- ii. **Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days** from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer
- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the **twenty-day period** following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of **Cahir National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

9. Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children are required to comply with the spirit of the Code of Behaviour. Cahir National School recognises that some children with SEN may need extra time and help in understanding some rules. Specialised Behaviour Plans may be necessary at times. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times.

Behaviour Plans will be put in place in consultation with the class teacher, Parent/Guardian, LS teacher, Resource Teacher and Principal. All will work together to make sure the child receives all the support they need. Any professional advice from our NEPS Psychologist will be taken into consideration.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a child with special needs adhere to rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the differences in all individuals. The class teacher will monitor peer support regularly.

10. Notification of a Child's Absence from School

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) SHOULD ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WHEN NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL OF A PUPIL'S ABSENCE;

- **THE SCHOOL SHOULD BE NOTIFIED OF THE ABSENCE ON THE FIRST DAY THE PUPIL RETURNS TO SCHOOL**
- **THE REASON FOR THE ABSENCE SHOULD BE NOTIFIED TO THE CLASS TEACHER**
- **THE ABSENCE SHOULD BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING BY LETTER / USING THE SCHOOL JOURNAL**
- **DETAILS PERTAINING TO THE ABSENCE, SUCH AS DURATION AND REASON, SHOULD BE PROVIDED**
- **SIGNIFICANT ABSENCES CAUSE BY ILL HEALTH (I.E. ABSENCES LONGER THAN 10 SCHOOL DAYS) SHOULD BE CERTIFIED.**

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

11. Records

TEACHERS WILL KEEP A RECORD TO TRACK AN INDIVIDUAL PUPIL'S BEHAVIOUR. SUCH RECORDS WILL CONTAIN;

- **INCIDENTS OF MISBEHAVIOUR,**
- **INTERVENTIONS USED TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR, INCLUDING CONTACT WITH PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) OR REFERRAL TO OTHER AGENCIES**
- **EVIDENCE OF IMPROVED BEHAVIOUR**
- **ANY SANCTIONS IMPOSED, AND THE REASONS THEY WERE IMPOSED**

PUPILS WILL BE TOLD WHEN A RECORD IS BEING MADE ABOUT THEIR BEHAVIOUR, AND THE REASONS FOR KEEPING A RECORD WILL BE EXPLAINED.

ALL RECORDS WILL BE KEPT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1988 AND THE DATA PROTECTION (AMENDMENT) ACT 2003.

12. Anti-Bullying Policy

Cahir National School is a Bully Free Zone. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of **Cahir National School** has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published by the Department of Education & Skills in September 2013.

12.1 Best Practice in the Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

12.2 Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES, 2013*.

12.3 School Contact Personnel

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in Cahir National School are class teachers, support teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) do not investigate or deal with bullying.

12.4 Education & Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community; adults should model the type of behaviours they promote to pupils.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention; the topic of bullying is addressed at each staff meeting.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community (eg: talks for parents/pupils on Stay Safe, Internet Safety/cyberbullying). A raising exercises per school year for each class (3rd to 6th classes).
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision also applies to monitoring pupils' use of communication technology within the school.
- Buddy system and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-displayed publicly in the school corridor.
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Positive Code of Behaviour of the school upon entry. It is also available on the school website.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, including posters, competitions, group assemblies etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
 - Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note in with homework.
 - Worry box for older children.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. All teachers will teach children to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say 'no' to such behaviour.
 - Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
 - Ensuring that children and parents accept the Acceptable Use Policy of the school.

Implementation of curricula

The implementation of the SPHE curriculum, according to our school plan including the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.

School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall Programme (integrated); cyberbullying (Webwise teachers' resources) and lessons from

Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai (when available) cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.

The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

12.5 Investigation & Follow-Up Procedures

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.

All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of *what, where, when, who and why*. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner. Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.

If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

It is school policy to request the assistance of another staff member in such investigations.

Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s) (if appropriate).

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.

It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

The following steps are taken in dealing with bullying behaviour:

1. In Cahir N.S. we try to enable those involved to engage in a mediated conversation, the purpose of which is to allow for the victim to have a voice and the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.
2. A verbal warning is given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. The perpetrator is requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop. There may be loss of specific privileges as a sanction for the perpetrator.
3. If bullying reoccurs, it may be deemed necessary to have the perpetrator sign a contract of agreement to stop the bullying behaviour. This would also be signed by the parent(s). The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.
4. If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parents /guardians, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension may occur. The Chairperson has the authority to enact an immediate suspension. Alternatively, in certain circumstances he/she may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator.

While the school supports parents and pupils in dealing with issues that arise outside of school, parents should be aware that the school is limited in its power to deal fully with issues that arise while the children are not under our care.

Follow up and recording

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account.

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased

- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is important that all recording of bullying incidents is done in an objective and factual manner. This school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

All staff keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. We use an incident book for use of teacher on the playground. The Principal also has a book for reporting of incidents other than those recorded in the playground book. All incidents should be reported to the relevant teacher.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The school has decided that, at the end of each school year, any written records pertaining to a class will be passed on to the next class teacher with the children's files.

Formal Stage 2-known as Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template known **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour.. It will be used only in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is completed, it will be retained in the Principal's office.

12.6 Working with Pupils Affected by Bullying

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Pastoral care system
- Buddy system
- Care team
- Group work such as Circle Time

If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be either for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

12.7 Supervision & Monitoring

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

12.8 Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine

grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

12.9 Policy Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

12.10 Communication

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12.11 Implementation Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

13. Policy Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of *Cahir National School* at its meeting held on 21st March 2023

Signed: *Jean McGearilt* Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: *Patrick Crean* Principal

Anti-Bullying Contract

Our School Rules on Caring for Myself and Others

- a. I should be kind and respectful to adults and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining silent and orderly when asked to do so.
- b. I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
- c. I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, cartons, wrappers, etc. home. I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- d. I should be truthful and honest at all times.
- e. I should never bully others. I should never allow others to bully me and if it happens I should tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.

Cahir National School is a “Bully- Free Zone”.

I understand, will try to keep and will encourage others to keep the rules of our school.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



What happened?



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What were you thinking at the time?



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What have you thought about since?



Who was affected and how?

How can you improve things?

Name _____ Date: _____ Parent Signature: _____

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

--

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

