

# *Code of Behaviour*



*Meenkilly National School*



## Meenkilly National School Code of Behaviour

### SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY:

Meenkilly N.S. is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Limerick, Brendan Leahy. It is managed by a Board of Management, elected according to the procedures agreed by the Partners in Education. The school has a Catholic ethos and this ethos is a guiding principle in the formulation and implementation of this Code of Behaviour Policy. Policy formation was a collaborative exercise between staff, Board of Management, parents and pupils.

### INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of Meenkilly N.S. has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

In devising this Code of Behaviour the Board of Management has considered the particular needs and circumstances of this school. Our aim is to accommodate the individuality of each child while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a safe and disruption-free environment

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 Code of Behaviour of *Meenkilly N.S.* has been developed in accordance with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

## 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 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.

## 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.

## 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.

The ethos of the school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. The School Code of Discipline reflects the Christian values promoted within the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. Everyone in the school is highly esteemed and respected - teachers and staff, pupils and parents/guardians and all visitors to the school.

## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

A high standard of behaviour is expected in the school, in the school grounds, on all school outings, tours, and activities.

- Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of discipline in the school. Positive techniques of praise, motivation and encouragement are used by teachers.
- To maintain a high standard of behaviour in the school requires a high level of co-operation among staff, and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians. The active support of parents/guardians is needed to maintain good behaviour in the school.
- The rules are being kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what pupils should do, rather than what they should not do.

## 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 & try where possible to use the toilet before and after each break
- respect - the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- avoid - swearing, fighting or name calling
- be inclusive - don't try to exclude others from games
- respect school property
- respect the property of others

### ***Behaviour in other School Areas***

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk in the school
- help to keep the school clean and tidy

- be polite mannerly and welcoming to parents, teachers, staff and all visitors to the school

### ***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

### **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.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

### **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.

## 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;

- Class Dojo-points scheme
- Special privileges

## 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
- Cheating e.g. copying of tests
- Running in the school
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner e.g. shouting/answering, back/arguing with teachers/staff
- Ignoring staff requests
- Refusing to apologise when an apology is appropriate
- Lying to staff regarding incidents

### ***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 and/or reminder(s) of school rules
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others e.g. time out
- The child writes out report of incidents including behaviour reflection form (at level 1 form to be retained on file)
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact
- Behaviour contract

### ***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.

## 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.

- Misuse of the internet or school email
- Unauthorized use of the school phone. Teachers must be present during the call.
- 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, kicking objects, throwing books or other objects)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Repeated 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

### *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/Deputy Principal and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention including completion of behaviour reflection form (option of sending home form for parent to sign)
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Implementation of extensive Behaviour management plan
- Report submitted to the Board of Management
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour

## ***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).
- In a serious breach of discipline where there is a health and safety issue a parent may be contacted to arrange for the collection of the pupil from the school. This includes any aggressive physical contact with pupils or staff.
- Deliberate and serious misuse of the internet or email, is found running searches or inappropriate topic or attempting to access inappropriate/unsuitable websites will result in disciplinary action including withdrawal of access privileges.

## **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.

- Substance abuse (e.g. Alcohol, tobacco and drug related incidents) see substance use Policy for procedure
- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Setting fires
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)
- 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, disabilities, 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.

## **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS**

### **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 Meenkilly N.S. 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 *Meenkilly N.S.*, 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

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 *Meenkilly 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 *Meenkilly 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 *Meenkilly N.S.* 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.

## 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 provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Meenkilly N.S. 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.

## 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 on Aladdin via the Aladdin Connect App
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences caused 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.

## RECORDS

A standardised record system will be used 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 Acts 1988 to 2018 and general data protection regulation 2016.

## POLICY RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of *Meenkilly National School* , June 17<sup>th</sup> 2021.

This policy will be reviewed on annual basis.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PATRON'S APPROVAL

This policy has been approved by St. Senan's Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron *Bishop Brendan Leahy*

## *School Rules*

*These rules have been devised in consultation with staff, parents and pupils*

### ***General***

*Children are expected to respect and show consideration for each other at all times.*

### ***At school***

- I should walk while in the school building.*
- I should always show respect for my fellow pupils.*
- I should never leave the school grounds without permission.*
- I should show respect for my property, always keeping my schoolbag, books and copies in good order.*
- I should try to be on time for school.*
- I should show respect for my school and school property.*
- I should always bring a sensible nutritional lunch to school (cans, fizzy drinks, nuts and chewing gum are not permitted).*
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.*
- I should be kind and respectful to teachers, all staff and visitors*
- I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.*
- I should be truthful and honest at all times.*
- I should always bring an explanation note from my parent/guardian if I have been absent.*
- Mobile phones and all other electronic devices are not permitted at school at any time.*

- *I should ask my parent/guardian to sign my homework diary each night (Monday - Thursday).*