

Code of Behaviour

At St. Benedict's and St. Mary's N.S., we aim to:

- model and promote a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life of Jesus Christ.
- instil within our students the values of caring for themselves, others, their school and their learning.
- establish standards of behaviour to ensure a safe and stimulating teaching and learning environment
- encourage responsibility among students for their own behaviour and learning

Rationale

Under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour. This Code of Behaviour is informed by the guidelines in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, (NEWB, 2008).

The Board of Management of St. Benedict's and St. Mary's N.S. reviewed our Code of Behaviour in consultation with the principal, staff, parents and students of the school. We used the audit checklist as a catalyst and our rationale for the review of the code was due to the following points

- The existing policy was due for review
- Behaviour management is a priority area identified by staff

Our Vision

At St. Benedict's and St. Mary's N.S. our vision is to "Love, Laugh and Learn". We strive to create a stimulating, learner-centred, safe environment, in which the holistic development of students is fostered. This reflects the ethos that is highly valued by our school community. It is our vision that our code is underpinned by the following rights

All members of our school community have the right to:

- Feel safe and valued
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Learn and teach in a supportive environment
- Understand expectations and consequences of behaviours

Fostering our Standards of Behaviour

In consultation with the children, a set of five Golden Rules have been developed by the Staff of St. Benedict's and St. Mary's N.S. to foster a standard of behaviour that applies to all.

“Our Golden Rules”

1. We are kind with our words and actions
2. We are honest
3. We listen
4. We work hard
5. We look after property

These rules are displayed in all of the classrooms, reception area, Principal's office, Parent's room, corridors, yard book, Assembly room, Library and P.E. Hall.

Leabhar Fiúntais (Merit book)

- In our school we use a programme called the Leabhar Fiúntais to record each child's progress in following our five golden rules.
- A letter of explanation of this programme will be communicated to parents annually.
- Every teacher will be updated on this programme annually.
- It is located in the child's homework journal.
- Each school day has a specific grid to monitor the child's behaviour and good practice. (See Appendix 1).
- This grid is compiled of 12 boxes (referred to as stamps).
- There are five stamps on this grid relating to good practice regarding punctuality (P), daily attendance (A), full uniform (U), complete homework (H) and neatness (N).
- From time to time children may not have some of these good practices in place for one reason or another. Please give a written explanation to the school explaining the matter to ensure your child will not lose a stamp.
- The next five boxes are five behaviour stamps corresponding to five periods during the school day: Morning (M), small yard (SY), afternoon (A), big yard (BY) and evening (E).
- Stamps remain intact if your child follows the rules and they will be praised for this, however if they display negative behaviour they will lose the corresponding behaviour stamp and receive an initial stage 1.
- If negative behaviours continue the children will progress through the stages
 - Stage 1 – Note home to parents describing inappropriate behaviour
 - Stage 2 – Yard timeout/withdrawal
 - Stage 3 – Withdrawal from class
 - Stage 4 – Extra homework
 - Stage 5 – Teacher meets with Parent/Guardian

- It is a framework for both acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour and good practice while also preventing and recording inappropriate behaviour and poor practice.
- Children begin each school week with fifty stamps and if the set number of stamps are intact by the end of a set period they will receive a class reward.
- There are rewards in place for the children and consequences at set stages.
- Every parent/guardian is asked to check their child's grid each evening.
- If the child has retained their stamps, parental praise is encouraged
- If the child has received a stage, we ask that the parent signs the note and discusses the behaviour with their child and returns it to school to be retained by their class teacher.
- The Leabhar Fiúntais affords students the opportunity to earn extra stamps daily for random acts of good behaviour, this will be recorded on the blank stamps.

Pupils with special needs

Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's Code of Behaviour but teachers will use their professional judgement in relation to regularity and level of sanctions. While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of the other children who may have experienced the same type of misdemeanours, they will also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties. Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour and are expected to support the school in the development of any behaviour plans and or individual education plans.

Responding to behaviour

Promoting positive behaviour

At our school, we have established initiatives to promote positive behaviour as we believe that students respond well to praise and acknowledgement of their efforts. We believe that the use of such initiatives can help affirm children's efforts to follow the code of behaviour and can also motivate other children to engage with the code. There are positive initiatives at both whole school, class level and on yard.

Whole School	Classroom	Yard
<p><i>May include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal praise • Praise over the intercom system 	<p><i>May include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal praise • Student of the week award 	<p><i>May include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal praise • Verbal report to class teacher

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of both excellent Leabhar Fiúntais attainment and improvements • Student of the month announced at assembly for a specific communicated behaviour • Positive behaviour book – individual comments read out at assembly • Attendance reward weekly, monthly and yearly • Random act of kindness/ improvement prize given at assembly • Visit to the principal's office for praise/reward • Positive phone call home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leabhar Fiúntais reward e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Golden time ○ Extra P.E./ Computers etc. ○ Games room/Drama room • Homework pass • Fieldtrips • Class award initiatives based on the NEPS Continuum of support • Stickers, raffle tickets, stationary • Positive note home • Positive phone call home • Visit to the principal's office for praise/reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry into the "Good behaviour book" • Additional stamp • Praise over the intercom system • Positive behaviour book – individual comments read out at assembly • Random act of kindness/ improvement prize given at assembly • Visit to the principal's office for praise/reward • Positive phone call home
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Responding to misbehaviour

At our school there are predictable consequences when misbehaviour or poor practice occurs. We as a school community have categorised such misbehaviours and poor practice into mild, moderate and serious (See Appendix 2). Our school seeks to ensure that responses to misbehaviour and poor practice are consistent and proportionate to the nature of the behaviour.

The school's response, depending on the severity of the misbehaviour or poor practice includes:

Whole school	Classroom	Yard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning with the child by identifying the misbehaviour and identification of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning with the child by identifying the misbehaviour and identification of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning with the child by identifying the misbehaviour and identification of the

<p>Golden Rule not being followed (<i>mild</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of our Leabhar Fiúntais framework (<i>mild</i>) • Teacher/Principal led intervention e.g. meeting with Principal, Report card, parent called to collect their child, Reflection sheet, Internal suspension, Loss of privileges, reduced timetable (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Individual Behaviour Plan (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Suspension (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Expulsion (<i>serious</i>) 	<p>Golden Rule not being followed (<i>mild</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of our Leabhar Fiúntais framework (<i>mild</i>) • Teacher/Principal led intervention e.g. meeting with Principal, Report card, parent called to collect their child, Reflection sheet, Internal suspension, Loss of privileges, reduced timetable (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Individual Behaviour Plan (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Suspension (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Expulsion (<i>serious</i>) 	<p>Golden Rule not being followed (<i>mild</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of our Leabhar Fiúntais framework (<i>mild</i>) • Teacher/Principal led intervention e.g. meeting with Principal, Report card, parent called to collect their child, Reflection sheet, Internal suspension, Loss of privileges, reduced timetable (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Individual Behaviour Plan (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Suspension (<i>moderate/serious</i>) • Expulsion (<i>serious</i>)
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If the Board of Management deems the misbehaviour to be of a serious nature (See Appendix 2) they may implement an immediate suspension/expulsion while an investigation is being conducted. Parent/Guardians reserve the right to appeal this decision.

Suspensions

The use of suspension is in line with “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools”; (NEWB, 2008, Chapters 10 and 11)

In cases of moderate and serious inappropriate behaviours a suspension may be issued. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing as soon as possible, giving full reasons for the decision.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

There may be instances where a behaviour warrants immediate action and a suspension is used in the interest of the safety of the student and other school community members. The Board of management has given permission to the principal to authorise such absences without prior approval or written notification if this occurs.

Rationale for the use of suspensions

We believe that a suspension can have value when used as a consequence for moderate or serious inappropriate behaviour. Suspensions can provide respite for staff and the student, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour. It also illustrates to other students that serious inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable at school.

Re-entry after suspension

A meeting with the parents/guardians and child will be held after a suspension is lifted. This meeting is convened to minimise recurrence of the inappropriate behaviour. The Individual Behaviour Plan may be reviewed.

Expulsion

The use of expulsion is in line with "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools"; (NEWB, 2008, Chapter 12)

Grounds for expulsion

The Board of Management of St. Benedict's and St. Mary's N.S. reserves the right to expel a pupil in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the terms of Sec. 24(4) and Sec. 24(5) of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

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

- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety

- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

The grounds for expulsion are similar to the grounds for suspension. In considering expulsion the Board of Management shall take in to account the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour and will have come to the belief that all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour have been exhausted.

Expulsion for a First Offence

The Board of Management shall expel on the basis of a single breach of the code of behaviour in the case of the following:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying alcohol or illegal drugs to another student in the school
- Sexual assault

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the procedural steps shall include:

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

Step 2 A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

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

Step 4 Board of Management's actions following the hearing

Step 5 Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

Step 6 Confirmation of the decision to expel

Step 1 Investigation

Parents/guardians shall be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour, the proposed investigation and the possibility that the pupil could be expelled

- A meeting between the pupil (depending on age), parents/guardians and the principal will be called. The parents/guardians will give their side of the story and have an opportunity to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. This meeting shall provide an opportunity for the parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how to best address the student's misbehaviour.
- If a pupil and her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting the principal shall send a registered letter advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school shall record the invitation issued to parents/guardians and their response in the pupil's file.

Step 2 Recommendation to 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 shall make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

The Principal shall

- Inform the pupil and the parents/guardians that the Board of Management is considering expulsion
- Ensure that the parents have records of the allegation against the pupil, the investigation and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents/guardians
- Notify the parents/guardians of the date and time of the hearing by the Board of management and invite them to that hearing
- Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written or oral submission to the Board of Management
- Ensure that the parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for that hearing

Step 3 Consideration by the Board of Management of Principal's Recommendation and the Holding of a Hearing

The Board of Management shall review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board shall undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It shall ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it shall hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing shall be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the principal and the parents/guardians shall put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party shall be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board shall take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the principal and the pupil. Parents/guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board shall facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard the Board shall ensure that the principal and 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, the Board shall decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

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 must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education Welfare) Act 2000, S24(1)). The Board of Management shall refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education Welfare Act 2000, S24(1)*).

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

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a 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 shall focus on alternative educational possibilities.

In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned shall come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education. Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, the Board of Management shall take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the pupil during this time. Suspension shall only be considered where there is the 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 to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Chairperson of the Board of Management shall formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents/guardians shall be notified by registered letter immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents/guardians and the pupil shall be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record in the Board of Management Minutes shall be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to suspend or expel a pupil to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil. Accordingly, the school shall advise parents/guardians of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent of the pupil.

The parents/guardians shall be informed in writing of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to a suspension or expulsion of a pupil in the:

- Letter of notification of suspension by the principal.
- Letter of notification of expulsion by the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms.

Review of use of expulsion

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

Review of this policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 – Leabhar Fiúntais Sample of Weekly Grid

Monday

P	AT	U	H	M	SY	A	BY	E	N		
Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5			

Tuesday

P	AT	U	H	M	SY	A	BY	E	N		
Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5			

Wednesday

P	AT	U	H	M	SY	A	BY	E	N		
Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5			

Thursday

P	AT	U	H	M	SY	A	BY	E	N		
Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5			

Friday

P	AT	U	H	M	SY	A	BY	E	N		
Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5			

Total

Appendix 2 -Category of Mild, Moderate and Serious misbehaviours and poor practice

Mild	Moderate	Serious
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chatter • Rocking on chair • School work avoidance/ignoring classroom instruction • Not sharing/taking turns • Using others property without permission • Calling out • Running in the classroom/school building • Disruption e.g. throwing, making noises, whistling, walking around the classroom • White lies • Not complying with healthy eating policy e.g. energy drinks, chewing gum etc. • Swearing • Name calling • Rough play e.g. disrupting games, rough play • Bad manners/speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching Stage 3, three times on the Leabhar Fiúntais • Prolonged occurrence of any of the categorised mild behaviours • Constant defiant behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students • The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety • The student is responsible for serious damage to property. • The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process • A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff • Actual violence or physical assault • Supplying alcohol or illegal drugs to another student in the school • Sexual assault • Use of mobile phone or other IT device

<p>disrespectfully</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding individuals • Littering • Out of bounds e.g. the yellow line • Invading personal space and privacy • Poor punctuality without parental communication of explanation • Incomplete homework without parental communication of explanation • Incomplete uniform without parental communication of explanation • Absence without parental communication of explanation • Poorly presented work 		<p>during school hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse or misuse • Bringing weapons to school or using objects as weapons in school • Throwing items with intent to hurt or destroy property • Leaving your class group without permission • Verbal abuse • Physical abuse • Physical fighting • Putting themselves or other children in danger • Stealing • Exiting school grounds without consent • Truancy • Repeated absence without parental communication of explanation • All types of bullying • Inappropriate contact • Misuse of IT
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