

SCOIL MHUIRE GAN SMAL CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

(Reviewed February 2024)

School ethos

At the centre of a whole school Code of Behaviour is the creation of a positive school climate that focuses on respect for the individual.

In accordance of the Education (Welfare) Act and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board), the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál has adopted the following Code of Behaviour policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.

Aims

The aim of the policy is, first and foremost, to develop self-discipline in our pupils and secondly to protect each and every pupil, staff member and visitor within our school. The school will endeavour to help pupils to understand their own behaviour, the reasons for it and how to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships.

- Rewards and rehabilitation procedures will take precedence over sanctions.
- Self-discipline may be nurtured and developed through discussion, self-assessment sheets, the KOAR Value system, Circle time and Golden time.
- The KOAR Value Code is a whole school system whereby kindness, obedience, attentiveness and respect (KOAR) are noted, recorded and rewarded on a monthly basis.

KOAR Value recording sheets are displayed at the top and bottom of the front and back stairs and pupils 'caught' displaying the values mentioned towards fellow pupils, staff or visitors are rewarded with a tick on the sheet which is initialled by the adult. Points are also awarded for behaviour on yard, corridor and stairs as well as lining up properly and promptly when the bell rings. The class with the most KOAR values will be acknowledged at assembly each month and presented with the Monthly KOAR Class award. The class will also be given an extra 15 minutes of playtime on yard, a subject/ homework pass (to be used on a Monday) or another reward deemed suitable by the class teacher.

The sentiment of **respect** is the corner stone of our Code of Behaviour

- ⤴ Respect for all staff of Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál
- ⤴ Respect for pupils
- ⤴ Respect for parents
- ⤴ Self-respect
- ⤴ Respect for all who enter Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál
- ⤴ Respect for school property and environment

According to this code:

- Every pupil has a right to be able to learn at school and to participate in all school activities without interference from other pupils.
- Pupils should behave in a well-mannered fashion at school and should not interfere with the efforts of other children to learn or participate in school activities.
- Pupils should endeavour to wear their school tracksuit each day.
- Pupils should arrive on time for all school activities.

Correction and behaviour management support

Past surveys administered to both pupils and parents have shown that both parties, separately, came to the same conclusion that informing parents/guardians of their child's achievement was the most satisfying reward for the child and, in the case of misbehaviour, the most effective sanction.

Essentially the role of the teacher is to teach while the responsibility for the child's behaviour ultimately lies with the parent/guardian. **The correction system relies heavily on close understanding and co-operation between parents and teachers.**

The card system

White Card - for petty offences

Yellow Card - for minor offences or after 5 white cards (i.e. 6th card is yellow)

Red Card - for a serious offence or after 3 yellow cards or the equivalent of 17 white cards

The card serves as a sanction for the pupil and a means of informing the parent of the misdemeanour. When a card is given, it must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned the following day. If not, a further sanction will ensue e.g. the pupil can be placed in another class, with work from his/her teacher, until such time as the card is returned signed and the pupil apologises for his/her behaviour.

On receipt of a red card, parents are requested to attend a support meeting in the school. At this meeting parents, the class teacher and a designated other teacher (Principal, Deputy Principal or teacher with responsibility for discipline) will discuss how they can jointly help to improve the pupil's behaviour. The pupil may be asked to participate in his/ her own rehabilitation e.g. by filling in a daily self-assessment sheet. Review meetings may follow for as long as deemed necessary.

Misbehaviour that threatens the safety of the pupil or others, or behaviour that causes concerns about future conduct on school trips and activities, may result in a pupil being withdrawn from such activities on health and safety grounds. Pupils who seriously misbehave may be suspended, in or out of school, and/or be disqualified from extra-curricular activities. A pupil may be expelled in accordance with the NEWB guidelines (see appendix).

Code of Behaviour – Junior Infants to First class

REWARDS:

- Outdoor yard play
- Praise
- Kindness award
- Stickers
- Treats
- Smiley face on board
- Good News book
- Pupil of the week
- Teddy sleepover
- Visit to other teacher or principal
- Golden Time
- Movement breaks
- Assembly certificate
- Positive feedback to parent/guardian

CLASSROOM SANCTIONS

- Non-verbal warning
- Verbal warning
- Time-out
- Visual symbol e.g. storm cloud/ sad face shown to pupil
- Sent to other class
- Speak to principal
- When deemed necessary a pupil may be put on a notebook which must be signed by the parent/guardian each day. This is a simple recording system that allows the school to track any pupil's behaviour that is a cause for concern. The record should note interventions tried and how the pupil has responded to them.
- Individual behaviour chart
- Miss Golden Time
- Phone call home/ chat to parents on the line

- Teachers may wish to use the 5 Step staged approach...
- 1. Verbal warning
- 2. Visual warning (name written on board)
- 3. Seated at a desk alone
- 4. Sent to another class
- 5. Sent to the principal's/ deputy principal's office

YARD SANCTIONS

- Non-verbal warning
- Verbal warning
- Time-out in shape or on line
- Leave spare/ skipping/ own yard
- Report to teacher
- Time out of yard in care of a teacher /SNA
- Inform parent
- Inform Principal and maybe go the office

OTHER

- Confiscation of items deemed dangerous
- Time out in other class
- Reasoning
- Giving responsibilities

IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES e.g. where a pupil's behaviour places himself or others in danger it may be necessary

- ⤴ To vary the start time/length of school day for a disruptive/unruly pupil and then gradually re-introduce them to the normal school day. This will be done only when all other avenues have been exhausted and in consultation with the parents of the pupil involved.
- ⤴ To use reasonable force to protect those involved. A staff member may have to restrain the pupil, for their own safety and the safety of others, and wherever possible

at least one other staff member will be present and all efforts will be made to contain the pupil, in safety, until calm is restored.

Code of Behaviour – Second class to Sixth class

REWARDS:

- The KOAR Value system (ticks on a sheet)
- Class Dojo points
- Stickers, sweets, pencils, prizes, certificates
- Golden Time
- Pizza/ ice-cream class party; teddy bears picnic, etc.
- Extra yard time
- Assembly awards
- Praise
- Homework passes
- Tickets/ Raffle
- Positive feedback to parents/guardians
- Positive feedback/visit to other teachers and principal
- Phone calls home to communicate good news/ chat to parent on the line
- Trips
- Pupil of the Day/Week
- Group of the Day/Week
- Star charts
- Giving the pupil a responsible job

SANCTIONS:

- Sometimes the most feasible way to deal with unruliness is to send the pupil to another classroom with plenty of suitable work to do, having first agreed this with the other teacher.
- Have a time-out table/chair in the room
- Use a timer for cooling down and to indicate when the teacher will be available to talk

- Get the pupil to draw, colour or write about the incident and what might have been a more appropriate behaviour
- Arrange for a 'time out' detention period during one of the breaks (not a full break)
- Miss 'Golden time' or a treat
- Miss part of a subject
- If group rewards are given, an individual's behaviour could cause loss of same
- On Health and Safety grounds certain activities may have to be cancelled for individuals or groups
- The child may be sent to the principal/deputy principal or other teacher
- When deemed necessary a pupil may be put on a notebook which must be signed by the parent/guardian each day. This is a simple recording system that allows the school to track any pupil's behaviour that is a cause for concern. The record should note interventions tried and how the pupil has responded to them
- Writing a letter of apology
- Standing time-out for a short period of time – e.g. constantly swinging on chair
- Using phone in the school: phone is taken away until a parent/ guardian comes in to collect it
- The school Card System can be applied with any of the above or as a stand-alone sanction

Teachers may wish to use the 5 Step staged approach...

- Verbal warning
- Visual warning (name written on board)
- Seated at a desk alone
- Sent to another class
- Sent to the principal's/ deputy principal's office

IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES e.g. where a pupil's behaviour places himself or others in danger it may be necessary

- ✧ To vary the start time/length of school day for a disruptive/unruly pupil and then gradually re-introduce them to the normal school day. This will be done only when all other avenues have been exhausted and in consultation with the parents of the pupil involved.

- ▲ To use reasonable force to protect those involved. A staff member may have to restrain the pupil, for their own safety and the safety of others, and wherever possible at least one other staff member will be present and all efforts will be made to contain the pupil, in safety, until calm is restored.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Pupils with SEN may require help to understand and observe the code. Pupils with learning difficulties may need to be taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour in more tangible ways, for example through visual prompts, pictures, discussion or role play as they may not be able to predict consequences as easily as their peers and may therefore be more vulnerable.

Class teachers, SETs and SNAs should check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that pupils with SEN can understand. It may be helpful to check for this understanding from time to time, especially when a pupil with SEN is acting in a way that would usually be seen as being in breach of the class or school rules.

Some pupils may need opportunities to practise observing the rules, with feedback on their progress.

The Card System

WHITE CARD (Petty offences)

- Continually talking in class—3 warnings to be given
- Continually interrupting—3 warnings to be given
- Continually out of seat/walking around class—3 warnings to be given
- Homework not done (regularly) and no note of explanation
- Faking a signature
- Squirting drinks or throwing food
- Not obeying exact instructions when teacher leaves the room
- Throwing things in class
- Interfering with or damaging other person's property
- Bad language or insulting gestures towards another person
- Disrespect towards a teacher, staff member or visitor to the school
- Name-calling
- Threatening language
- Fighting

- Misbehaving in corridor or toilets
- Excluding others from games

YELLOW CARD (Minor offences)

- Persistent name-calling
- Fighting of a vicious nature
- Graffiti
- Damaging school property
- Serious disrespect towards teacher, staff member or visitor to the school
- Persistent cheeky or smart remarks
- Spitting at another person
- Point blank refusal to carry out instructions
- Theft

RED CARD (Major offences)

- Leaving school without permission
- Vandalism
- Wilful destruction of school property
- Smoking, vaping or use of other prohibited substances on the school premises
- Theft (serious)
- Bullying (persistent and serious)
- Violence: seriously assaulting another person
- Serious disrespect towards a teacher, staff member or visitor

Any of the sanctions mentioned on the previous page may be imposed along with the card if deemed necessary.

Any items or substances deemed inappropriate or dangerous will be confiscated and will incur appropriate sanction.

A red card means automatic suspension, either in school or at home (this being at the school's discretion).

THE SANCTIONS MAY ALSO BE APPLIED WHEN ON **SCHOOL TOURS/TRIPS**

And the following also if necessary

- The school may be phoned and the pupil collected
- The pupil may be banned from further tours/trips
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) may be asked to accompany the child on future tours/trips

IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES group or whole class sanctions may be imposed.

Bullying behaviour and the Code of Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in our school. A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying is essential to effective practice. The relevant teacher for dealing with an incident will normally be the class teacher but in more serious cases the Deputy Principal or Principal will be involved.

- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.
- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Parents or guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussion the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. They will be required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issue and restoring relationships between the children involved. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- Parents or guardians must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might

suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians.

- It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, caretakers, cleaners should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally, in the first instance, be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the principal.
- Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management.
- Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best 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, 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 a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident. Each member of the group should be helped to handle the possible pressures they often face from the other members after interview by the teacher.
- If it is concluded 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 Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who was being bullied is ready and agreeable.

Suspension Policy

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál reserves the right to suspend pupils in extreme situations. Parents will be involved at an early stage and existing disciplinary procedures will be implemented before resorting to suspension.

- Pupils may be suspended for repeated instances of serious misbehaviour or a single incident of gross misbehaviour. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of NEWB. (See appendix).
- Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested to attend the school to meet with the principal and relevant teachers. In some cases, another representative of the Board of Management may also be present.
- In cases of gross misbehaviour, the Board of Management will authorise the principal to sanction an immediate suspension.
- If a pupil is considered for suspension, the parents will be informed and a meeting arranged with the principal and /or other designated persons. All involved will be allowed to state their case and the pupil will be given the right to reply/comment. Following this, if the decision is to suspend the pupil, the parents will be informed of the form the suspension will take and its duration.
- The school is anxious that the sanction of suspension should be a learning experience and this will be expressed to all concerned. The emphasis will be on rehabilitation rather than punishment. During their period of suspension, the pupil may be requested to write an account or do a project directly related to their suspension and including how they might improve their behaviour in the future.
- During the meeting with the principal the parents will be informed of the length of the suspension (maximum 3 days though in exceptional circumstances this can be extended to 5 while necessary arrangements are being made for the safe re-introduction of the pupil), whether this will be in school or at home and assignments to be completed if the pupil is at home. If in school suspension is imposed, the pupil will receive work from the class teacher on a daily basis and this will be done in another classroom decided by the principal and the teachers involved.

It is assumed that a pupil on in-school suspension in another classroom will behave appropriately. However, if this is not the case, out of school suspension may be necessary.

- If unacceptable behaviour continues after in-school suspension has been served a decision may be taken to impose out of school suspension for subsequent offences.
- A record of all suspensions will be kept in book in principal's office.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES, as outlined below, may have to be taken in the event of a pupil continuing to display problematic behaviour following the receipt of a red card or suspension:

- Members of the Special Needs team, in conjunction with the principal and class teacher, may examine the pupil's test scores and assess the pupil's ability, to determine whether he/she has a learning or behavioural difficulty and is in need of learning support.
- NEPS may be contacted and a request made for an educational and/or behavioural assessment to be carried out on the pupil.
- Consultation with CAMHS, Tusla, the Primary Care Team at Richmond Barracks or with other external agencies may take place with a view to assessing the emotional and behavioural needs of the pupil.
- The pupil may be referred to the School Completion Team for anger or bereavement management strategies.
- Report Notebook: The pupil may be given a report notebook into which, at each break in school day, the teacher will record details of the pupil's behaviour and work. The notebook will then be brought home to be signed by the parents/guardian at the end of the day. This will continue for a defined period e.g. until the pupil has completed a full week incident free. The notebook can be restarted if the pattern of misbehaviour resumes.
- Mentor System: The pupil may be assigned a teacher to whom he/she will report after each break to review their behaviour in the yard.
- The pupil may be removed from the classroom for whatever periods of the day appear to be problematic. An individual programme of work will be provided for these periods.
- An Individual Behaviour Programme may be drawn up to meet the specific needs of any pupil. This will be done by a team including the teacher and other support staff such as the principal, SEN teacher, the teacher with responsibility for the Code of Behaviour Policy, School Completion team and may be monitored by NEPS.
- A Contract of Behaviour may be drawn up between the pupil and the school. The pupil and his/her parents will be asked to sign this.
- In exceptional circumstances e.g. on Health and Safety grounds it may be necessary to request that a pupil attend school on a shortened day when a parent/guardian would be required to take the pupil from school. In such circumstances, work would be set for the pupil to do at home. Alternately, it may be necessary to vary the pupil's school day between SEN teacher and class.

Expulsion policy

The Board of Management may consider expulsion of a pupil on the recommendation of the principal, where it determines that circumstances are of a serious enough nature to warrant such a step. The BOM has this authority (Ref. Section 12.1 of NEWB guidelines).

When a pupil places himself/herself, other pupils, a teacher or other school staff at risk there may be no alternative open to the Board of Management other than expulsion.

In a situation where a pupil has consistently failed to conform to the school Code of Behaviour, and has been suspended on a regular basis, expulsion may be necessary.

Expulsion will take place in accordance with NEWB Guidelines 12.2 for Developing a Code of Behaviour: suspensions and expulsions (see appendix).

REVIEW and MONITORING

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the BOM on a biannual basis and/or when the need arises. The BOM will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

Policy adopted by the BOM in February 2024.

Signature:



Signature:



Mary O' Brien

David Gough

Chairperson Board of Management

Principal Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál

Date: 27th February 2024

Date: 27th February 2024

APPENDIX 1

Section 10 'NEWB Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour'.

Access to education shapes the chances of children and young people in a fundamental way. For this reason, a proposal to exclude a student, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted only by very serious behaviour.

The responsibility of the Board of Management

The Board of management should

- ⤴ ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedures for, the use of suspension and expulsion that are in line with NEWB guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron
- ⤴ ensure that all parents and students are advised about, and aware of, the school's policy for suspension and expulsion
- ⤴ ensure that fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of these procedures
- ⤴ take special care to ensure that the fair procedures are accessible to people with disabilities or those from different or cultural backgrounds
- ⤴ ensure that the BOM and the Principal are equipped for their roles in relation to the use of suspension and expulsion.

The BOM and the Principal have a duty to ensure that there are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion.

Section 11: Suspension

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

11.1 Authority to suspend

The BOM of a recognised school has the authority to suspend a student. Where this authority is delegated to the Principal, the delegation should be done formally and in writing.

11.2 The grounds for suspensions

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. 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 school property.

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

11.3 Determining the appropriateness of suspending a student

Suspensions can provide a 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.

11.5 Procedures in respect of suspensions

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

- ⤴ inform the student and their parents about the complaint
- ⤴ give the parents and student an opportunity to respond

11.6 The period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the BOM for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, a BOM may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning suspensions.

The Board should formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998

11.11 Records and reports (see appendix 3 record form)

Formal written records should be kept of:

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

Report to the Board of Management

The principal should report all suspensions to the BOM with the reasons for and duration of each suspension.

Factors to consider before suspending a student:

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- ⤴ What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- ⤴ How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- ⤴ Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- ⤴ What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in the yard, in a group)?
- ⤴ What factors may have triggered the serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- ⤴ What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- ⤴ Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- ⤴ How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- ⤴ What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- ⤴ Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- ⤴ Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- ⤴ What interventions have been tried? Over what period?

- ⤴ How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- ⤴ What has been the result of those interventions?
- ⤴ Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- ⤴ Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological or counselling been sought where appropriate?
- ⤴ Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- ⤴ Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- ⤴ Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportional response

- ⤴ Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- ⤴ Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of suspension

- ⤴ Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- ⤴ Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- ⤴ How will the suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- ⤴ Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

APPENDIX 2

Section 12 'NEWB Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour'.

12.1 The BOM of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should not be delegated.

12.2 The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including

- Meeting with parents and student to try to find ways of helping the student change their behaviour
- Making sure the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour ensuring all other options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (NEPS, HSE, National Behavioural Support Service, CAMHS, NCSE)

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

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

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

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where a BOM forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- ⤴ a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- ⤴ actual violence or physical assault
- ⤴ supplying illegal drugs to another student in school

- ⤴ sexual assault

12.4 Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include;

- ⤴ a detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- ⤴ a recommendation to the BOM by the Principal
- ⤴ consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
- ⤴ BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing
- ⤴ consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
- ⤴ confirmation of the decision to expel

It is a matter for each BOM to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps require separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Once a detailed investigation has been carried out under the direction of the principal the parents will be informed in writing as it serves the function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the misbehaviour.

A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal

Where the principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the principal makes a recommendation to the BOM to consider expulsion. The principal should

- ⤴ inform the parents and the student that the BOM is being asked to consider expulsion
- ⤴ ensure that the parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the BOM is being asked to consider expulsion
- ⤴ provide the BOM with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents
- ⤴ notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the BOM and invite them to that hearing
- ⤴ advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the BOM
- ⤴ ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them time to prepare for the hearing

Parents should be told of the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- ⤴ What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- ⤴ How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- ⤴ Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- ⤴ What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in the yard, in a group)?
- ⤴ What factors may have triggered the serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- ⤴ What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- ⤴ Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- ⤴ How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- ⤴ What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- ⤴ What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- ⤴ How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- ⤴ What has been the result of those interventions?

- ⤴ Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- ⤴ Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological or counselling been sought where appropriate?
- ⤴ Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- ⤴ Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?
- ⤴ Is the BOM satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportional response

- ⤴ Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- ⤴ Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

- ⤴ To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- ⤴ Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- ⤴ In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

Appendix 3: Template for recording and reporting suspensions

Name:	Date:
The investigation (including notes of interviews held)	
The decision-making process	

Decision and rationale behind decision
Duration of and conditions attached to the suspension