

# Code of Conduct

## Introduction

### Aims of Primary Education

The aims of Primary Education may be stated briefly as follows:

- To enable children to live full lives as children,
- To equip them to avail of further education,
- To prepare them to live full and useful lives as adults in society.

### Vision & Mission Statement.

Scoil Naomh Náille aims to prepare pupils for life by enabling them to make the best possible use of their inherent and potential capabilities including physical, mental and spiritual skills.

Self esteem is fostered by the valuing of pupils, by a willingness to listen and understand and by a positive view of learning as a shared journey. All achievements are recognised and applauded. These may include academic achievements, positive behaviour, participation in sports and the arts as well as achievements outside the school environment.

The school aims to provide a safe and secure learning environment for each child and to ensure a duty of care at all times while the school is in operation.

Scoil Naomh Náille supports the principals of:

1. Mutual Respect and Inclusiveness – particularly with reference to children with a disability or other special needs.
2. Equality of access and participation in the school.
3. Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, language and way of life in society.

Religious Education is provided for pupils in accordance with the doctrines and traditions of the Catholic Church. The school is under the Patronage of the Bishop of Raphoe, Rev. Alan McGuckian.

The quality of the relationships between management, teachers, parents and pupils enhances the educational partnership and a sense of community is fostered between them. The importance of parents/guardians as educators of their children is recognised and valued and close contact is maintained between school and home. The pupils are encouraged to have a knowledge, appreciation and understanding of their local area, which will develop their sense of responsibility to their community.

Scoil Naomh Náille also encourages links with the wider community, e.g. St. Naul's G.A.A Club, Eany Celtic F.C., Inver Community Centre, Donegal Town Rugby Club, Donegal Golf Club and the parish church of St. Naul in Ardaghey, Inver.

These guidelines constitute the school's **CODE OF CONDUCT**.

## **Aims of a Code of Conduct**

The aims of a code of conduct are:

- To help create a positive learning environment in which every pupil can benefit from school.
- To help pupils to become more self-disciplined and to encourage good standards of behaviour.
- To help organise a large group so that school can operate smoothly for the benefit of all.
- To care in a practical way for pupils, staff, the school and its environment.

## **Promoting a Happy School**

Encouraging high standards of behaviour among pupils, and creating and maintaining an orderly atmosphere for learning in the school involves a whole school approach. Teachers explain the code of conduct on a regular basis, teaching children the importance of respect for self and others. This results in sound relationships between teachers and pupils, leading to effective teaching and learning. At each assembly we discuss topics such as anti-bullying, respect for fellow pupils and staff and positive behaviour.

## **Responsibility of Adults**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of Staff*

The Teaching Council has set out a code of professional behaviour and practice for teachers. In conjunction with this code we expect teachers to:

- Be courteous towards each other, pupils and parents.
- Be prepared for lessons, be professional and on time.
- Dress in a professional and appropriate manner.
- Communicate in a positive and appropriate manner.
- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of Parents*

Parents are expected to:

- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, sufficient healthy lunch and correct full uniform.
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/Principal through the school office or by emailing the teaching directly to their school email address.
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same

- Label pupils coats and other property.
- Supervise their young children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another child, not their own, on the school premises during official school times.

### **Content of the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct covers the following areas:

- Behaviour in class
- Behaviour in the playground
- Behaviour in the school environment
- Behaviour on school trips/outings
- Attendance at school
- Homework

### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

### **School Rules & Expectations**

#### **1: Rules regarding Behaviour in Class**

- Pupils are expected to respect the right of other pupils to learn and to avoid disrupting the work of the classroom.
- Pupils are expected to have respect for their teachers and follow instructions given by them.
- Pupils are expected to go to and from their classroom in an orderly manner.
- Running is not allowed at any time in classrooms or corridor.
- Pupils are expected to show courtesy and respect towards other pupils.

#### **2: Rules regarding Behaviour in the Playground**

- Pupils are expected to have respect for the person and property of others.
- Pupils are expected to avoid rough play and bullying (both verbal and physical).
- Pupils are expected to obey signals at the end of break.
- Pupils are only permitted to re-enter the school premises during break with the teacher's permission.
- Pupils are forbidden to climb walls or fences.
- Bad language will not be tolerated in the playground.
- Pupils must remain in their own designated areas.

### 3: Rules regarding Behaviour in the School Environment

- Pupils are expected to move about the school in an orderly manner.
- Pupils shall not remain on the school premises after school activities are finished.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for school property.
- Pupils are expected to come to and from school with due care for other pupils, for property, for traffic and pedestrians.
- Pupils are expected to respect other pupils' privacy when in the bathroom areas. Only one child should be in the bathroom area at any one time.

### 4: Rules regarding Behaviour on School Tours and Outings

- School tours and outings present particular challenges for the school. As well as the normal standard of behaviour expected from all our pupils, the following should be noted:
- Pupils must wear their uniform on all school tours and outings.
- Pupils must obey the instructions of teachers, drivers, tour guides, or any person designated to be in charge of them during the course of the outing.
- Pupils are not permitted to absent themselves from the travelling group, except with the express permission of the teacher in charge.

### 5: Rules regarding Attendance at School

- Pupils are required to be regular in their attendance at school.
- Parents are required to explain all absences to the school as the Principal is required by law to report to the Tusla Education Support Service all pupils with absences over 20 days; and the reasons for absences.
- Parents are asked to email the school on the morning of each absence, informing the school of the reason and the possible duration of the absence.
- If a child is to be absent from school for a number of days, parents are asked to inform the school by email in advance.
- A text message is sent to the primary contact through Aladdin pupil management software ten minutes after an absence is recorded, if the absence has not been explained. An explanation for the absence is requested.
- After a pupil has been absent without prior notification and explanation to the school, an email from the parent/guardian must be submitted on the pupils return to school.
- Pupils are expected to be on time for school each day and, in the event of a late arrival, teachers should be informed by email.
- Truancy from school is considered a serious offence and is reported to parents/guardians and to the Tusla Education Support Service.
- Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises for any reason, unless collected by parents or guardians. The collecting adult should inform the teacher by email in advance.

### 6: Rules regarding Homework

- Homework consolidates work already done in school.
- It is given on a regular basis and pupils are expected to complete it neatly.
- Parents/guardians are requested to ensure that homework, written and oral is completed. They are requested to check the journal nightly, and sign if requested by the teacher.
- If for some reason homework cannot be completed then a note stating this should be sent to the class teacher by email or in the homework diary.

## 7. Rules regarding Misc. items

- Pupils are expected to wear their school uniform.
- Tracksuits and runners are essential for physical education.
- Jewellery other than watches and stud earrings are not allowed in school.
- Toys/Trading cards/Games consoles etc. may be allowed on occasion if permission is given by the class teacher.

## Reward Systems

The use of praise and rewards for good behaviour is promoted within the school. We aim to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval,
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book,
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation,
- A word of praise in front of a group or class,
- Prizes at Assembly for behaviour/lining up at break time/attendance, etc.,
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege,
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

The following are samples of reward systems currently in use in the school:

Junior Classes	–	Stickers/Star Charts/Team or Table of the week/Table captain of the day/points reward system/Homework off
Senior Classes	–	Student of the week/Best Irish speaker/Homework off (stamp sheet)/Gardening Activities
Learning Support/ Resource	–	Stickers/prizes

## School Organisation

### **Yard:**

The school yard has designated play areas for different classes/yard games. Teams for yard games should be assigned by teachers.

### **Supervision:**

The yard has one teacher supervising each break. There are also up to five SNAs on the yard at break times. Pupils who require bathroom visits during break must ask permission from the teacher on yard duty.

### **Wet Day Supervision:**

Pupils remain in their seats – board games/colouring activities will be provided. One teacher walks between the rooms and up to five SNAs are in attendance in their respective classes.

### **Absences:**

If a teacher is absent then another teacher will carry out supervision.

### **Special Needs Pupils:**

Children with SNA allocation have SNA supervision in the yard.

## Misbehaviours

Maintaining standards of behaviour will also involve, in some instances, the application of sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. When sanctions are invoked, pupils should understand that what they have done is unacceptable and it is the misbehaviour that is rejected. The following are samples of unacceptable behaviours. This is not an exhaustive list:

### Minor Misbehaviours:

Homework not done and no note received from parent, mobile phone at school, interfering with others, rudeness, borrowing items without asking, inattentiveness, answering out of turn, alienating friends, not wearing uniform, throwing small items, swinging on chairs.

### Serious Misbehaviours:

Fighting, bullying, truancy, bad language, bad attitude, name calling, exclusion, rough play, disrespecting others, hitting, back talking, belittling personal comments, damaging play equipment or school property, stealing, leaving school premises without permission, climbing on walls/fence.

### Gross Misbehaviours

Gross Misbehaviours are where a student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the safe operation of the school. Examples of Gross Misbehaviour include:

- Serious damage to school property
- Striking a member of staff
- Serious physical violence which threatens safety of other pupils

A single incident of gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

## Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this. The particular stage used will depend on the seriousness of the misbehaviour.

1. Reasoning with the pupil (including advice on how to improve).
2. Reprimand or warning regarding behaviour
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others (5-15 minutes within own classroom/yard area to complete task at hand or cool down)
4. Loss of privileges/Consequence sheet (2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class)
5. Teacher communicates with parents/guardians – solutions and strategies outlined. Teacher also informs Principal at this stage.

6. Referral to the principal teacher.
7. Exclusion from some school outings.
8. Temporary suspension.
9. Expulsion

Communication with parents/guardians through letters, phone call or meetings will occur at all stages from stage four or where necessary so that parents/guardians are involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

### **Procedures in respect of Suspension. (as per pages 70- 77 of the NEWB Guidelines)**

The BOM of a recognised school has the authority to suspend a student. Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. The following procedures will apply in respect of suspension:

- Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.

If suspension is still decided upon:

- Principal notifies parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:
  - The period 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 student and the parents.
  - The provision for appeal to the Board of management or Secretary General of the Dept. Of Education (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
  - Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the NEWB will be notified.

### **Records and reports.**

Formal written records will be kept of:

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

### **Expulsion.( As per page 82 of the NEWB Guidelines)**

#### **Procedures in respect of expulsion.**

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
  - Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
  - Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal
- Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing.

- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- If the BOM is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, it must notify the Tusla Education Support Service in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after TESS have received written notification. TESS should be notified using a **Notice of Intention to Expel form** which is available on [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie) or from their helpline (1890 36 3666).
- Consultations arranged by TESS.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

### **Appeals.**

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education (Education Act 1998 section 29)

### **The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy

### **Timeframe for Review:**

This policy was originally drafted and ratified by the Board of Management in February 2013. It was reviewed in January 2018 and again in January 2023 and was ratified by the Board of Management on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

This policy will be reviewed in January 2026.