

**St. Manchan's N.S.**

# **Code of Behaviour**



## **Code of Behaviour**

**School Name:** St Manchan's National School, Mohill, Co. Leitrim

**Date:** September 2005, Revised June 2010, February 2013, February 2015, February 2024

**Title:** Code of Behaviour

St. Manchan's N.S. is a Catholic National School. Christian values are emphasized in the school. Children's rights are protected. Every child is entitled to be treated fairly.

School opens at:	9:05am
Classes start at:	9:25am
School closes at:	1:45pm (Infants) 2:45pm (1 <sup>st</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> class)
Telephone:	071-9631774
Email:	mohillns@gmail.com

### **Foreword**

To achieve the aims of Education order, organization and structure are necessary in any school. The Code of Behaviour is there to ensure that children have a safe and happy environment in which to learn. Good relations, good communication and good cooperation between children, teachers and parents/guardians are vital.

Respect is central to the Code of Behaviour – self-respect and respect for others. Essentially good behaviour, courtesy and Christian virtues are at the core of the Code of Behaviour. All choices regarding religious and spiritual beliefs are equally respected in the school.

The emphasis of the Code is positive. Good behavior is rewarded and misconduct is discouraged. The emphasis is on giving good behaviour recognition. To maintain order sanctions are imposed when necessary. It is the bad behaviour (not the child) which is unacceptable. Every child is an individual and background, environment, personality, ability etc. must be taken into account. School rules are clear, simple and fair. Every effort is made to be consistent, reasonable and fair at all times. The support and goodwill of parents/guardians is vital in implementing the Code of Behaviour. Parents are provided with a copy on enrolment and in accepting a place for their child they are accepting that they will abide by the Code of Behaviour and all school policies.

## **Philosophy and General Aims**

The Code of Behaviour is in place to promote:

- Respect for other people and other people's property
- Good listening-, learning- and working-habits
- Self-respect, self-confidence and self-discipline
- A positive learning environment
- An understanding of right and wrong
- A friendly atmosphere
- Independence
- Cooperation
- Honesty
- Loyalty

**School – Rules** St. Manchan's National School follows the "Golden Rules" and these rules are on display in every classroom.

## **Golden Rules**

- **We are gentle – We don't hurt others**
- **We are kind and helpful – We don't hurt anybody's feelings**
- **We listen – We don't interrupt**
- **We are honest – We don't cover up the truth**
- **We work hard – We don't waste our own or others' time**
- **We look after property – We don't waste or damage things**

## **Conduct in Class**

- Every child has the right to learn

- I should not be disruptive in class
- I should cooperate with class rules and directions
- I should bring my homework, proper books, copies etc to school.

### **Conduct in schoolyard**

- Every child has a right to enjoy his/her playtime free from intimidation
- I should not cause trouble in the school-yard
- Every game should be sporting and played fairly
- Rough games are not allowed
- I may not leave the school-yard
- I should tell the teacher on yard-duty about any incident
- When the bell rings I should walk to my line without delay
- I should walk quietly and orderly inside in the line.

### **Health and Safety**

- I should always walk while in the school building.
- I should have a healthy lunch
- Crisps, fizzy drinks, chewing-gum, glass-bottles, tippex and mobile-phones are not permitted
- I should not leave the school at any time without permission
- Children may not leave the school-premises except by the main-gate (facing the main-entrance)
- I should not be in the school or on school-grounds after school without adult supervision
- If a child comes in contact with an infectious disease the school should be informed without delay
- If a parent/guardian is unavailable during the school-day some arrangement should be made in case a child has to go home unexpectedly because of illness or an accident
- Details of these arrangements, contact numbers etc. should be given to the school. The school should be kept informed of any change of address, contact number etc.
- Junior/Senior Infants should be collected at 1:45pm

- Children from 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class should be collected at 2:45pm. They should not be on school-grounds after this time unless supervised by an adult. The school cannot accept responsibility after school-hours.

### **Bullying**

- Every child has a right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation
- Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others and includes deliberate exclusion, cyberbullying and identity based bullying.
- Children should respect each other by reporting all instances of bullying
- All unkind actions, name-calling or unkind remarks will not be tolerated
- St. Manchan's National School is a "bully-free" zone.

Bullying is always unacceptable and will be dealt with in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Notes**

A written note from parents/guardians is expected beforehand if:

- A child has to go home early
- A child is going on holidays
- A child cannot participate in a PE class or any other class.

A written note is also expected if:

- A child comes to school late unaccompanied by a parent/guardian
- A child is absent for a day or more
- A child has not done his/her homework.

### **Homework**

It is school-policy to give homework regularly. It is advisable to set out a specific time and place for homework i.e. a quiet place at a table free from distraction from television etc. It is important that parents/guardians show an active interest in their children's homework. The time taken for this will vary from child to child, but should in most cases take between 30 minutes and one hour. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. If for some reason

homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal.

Generally, homework is not given at weekends. Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is not permitted. Please refer to the school Homework Policy for further information

### **Jewellery**

Students are permitted to wear stud earrings and watch only.

### **Cellular enabled/ Sim enabled devices, Mobile phones**

Use of mobile phones, cellular/Sim enabled devices during school hours is strictly forbidden. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil.

### **School Uniform**

All pupils must wear the school uniform.

### **Strategies:**

The Code of Discipline is positive. The emphasis is on reward not sanctions. ‘Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí!’ Praise can be given by:

- A complementary word or gesture
- A comment in a child’s copybook
- A visit to another classroom or to the principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of class or group
- A system of merit marks
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent/guardian, written or verbal communication

### **Children with Special Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, Special Education teacher and or principal who will work closely with home to

ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

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

### **Dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

The teacher/principal will treat each incident independently. Teachers will keep a dated record of interventions tried and students' response. The degree of misdemeanors will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common-sense approach with regard to the gravity/ frequency of such misdemeanors. Normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilized.

### **Minor misdemeanours:**

Disruptive in class / late for school / running in the school / boisterous in the line / leaving seat without permission / littering / being unmannerly / not completing homework /endangering self or others in the yard etc.

### **Serious misdemeanours:**

Constantly disruptive in class / lying / stealing / damaging other pupil's property / bullying / excluding or isolating other children or encouraging others to do so / being rude or cheeky / back answering a teacher / frequenting school premises after school hours / leaving school premises without permission / lazy or careless work / unacceptable language / endangering self or others / bringing phones/devices to school / deliberately injuring others.

### **Gross misdemeanours:**

Deliberately causing serious hurt to another pupil, cheeky back-answering, bringing dangerous weapons to school, burning school property, rough, threatening, violent behaviour, smoking cigarettes, vapes or bringing alcohol, drugs or illegal substances to school, blatantly disregarding authority or school-rules, constantly tormenting other pupils etc.

1. **Dealing with minor misdemeanours - strategies:**

- Speaking with pupils
- Reasoning with pupils
- Giving advice on how to improve

2. **Dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours- strategies:**

- Pupil writes a story of what is happening – to be signed by parent
- Temporary separation from peers
- Denial of privileges
- Giving extra work
- Note to be signed by parent or phone call to parent from teacher.
- Pupils who misbehave frequently may not be allowed to participate in school outings.
- Send to principal
- The principal will record the misdemeanour in writing
- Teacher meets with one/both parents/guardians

3. **Dealing with serious misdemeanours- strategies:**

- The principal will keep a written record of misdemeanours.
- Parents/guardians meet with teacher and principal.
- Parents/guardians meet with principal and chairperson of the school Board of Management.

4. **Dealing with gross misdemeanours - strategies:**

- Principal to sanction immediate three days suspension in accordance with Rule 130 (5) of the National Schools Rules pending discussion with parents.
- Ten days suspension with written permission from the Board of Management.
- A longer suspension with written permission from the Board of Management.
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6).
- Every effort will be made to seek psychological service if this is deemed necessary. Help will also be sought from the appropriate services e.g. The H.S.E, NEPS etc.



Note that in exceptional cases and/or with serious/gross offences the Principal with the Board's authority can immediately suspend the guilty pupil(s) without following the customary steps prior to suspension.

**It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only and are not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.**

### **Suspension**

'Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/ herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.' NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools page 70.

As suspension and expulsion can have a huge impact on a child's education the Board of Management view these as serious steps warranted by very serious misbehaviours. Therefore, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised prior to the commencement of these sanctions. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter, depending on the circumstances.

The Board of Management will delegate the decision to suspend a pupil, for up to three days, to the principal. If a suspension for longer is considered necessary, the Board of Management will be informed for consideration and approval.

Suspension may be considered for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. During the period of suspension, the pupil retains their place in the school. Suspension will be proportionate to the behaviour that is causing concern. Various factors will be considered before suspending a pupil: -

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension

Suspension will form part of a behaviour management plan and will:

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the pupil and their parents
- Give the school an opportunity to plan other interventions and
- Impress on a pupil and their parents the seriousness of the behavior

In general, the class teacher will fully investigate the matter and give a report to the principal. If the principal thinks suspension may be necessary, she will inform pupil and parents about the complaint. The parents/ guardian will be informed either by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. The parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the principal. The parents and pupils will be given an opportunity to respond, before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. If the parents fail to attend a meeting the principal will write to parents advising them of the gravity of the matter. After reviewing the situation and discussing the matter with the parents and pupil the principal will make a decision as to whether suspension is appropriate or not.

If the principal decides to suspend the pupil she will inform the parents and pupil in writing of the decision to suspend and the letter will contain the following: -

- The period of suspension and the dates when the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- Arrangements for returning to school (affirm commitment to Code of Behaviour)
- Provision for an appeal to the BOM
- Right to appeal to Secretary General of the DES

Suspension will not last more than 3 school days, except in exceptional circumstances. If a suspension of longer than 3 days is considered necessary, the principal must inform the BOM for consideration and approval. The BOM will place a ceiling of 10 school days on any one period of suspension

The BOM will review any proposed suspension which will bring the number of days the pupil is absent to more than 20 in any school year. Any such a suspension is open to appeal under section 20 of the Education Act 1998.

Parents may appeal any suspension made by the principal to the BOM. Parents may appeal any suspension made by the BOM to the patron. In the event that the total number of days that the pupil is suspended reaches 20 days the parents may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Parents will be given details on how to make an appeal.

A suspension may be removed if the BOM decide to do so for any reason or if the Secretary General of the department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed. In exceptional circumstances the principal may consider an immediate suspension necessary. If the presence of the pupil in the school would represent a serious threat to the safety of other pupils or staff or any other person. Fair procedures will still be applied and an investigation will take place before the decision is made to make an immediate suspension. The parents of the pupil will be informed and arrangements made with them for the collection of the pupil. After a period of suspension, the pupil will be given the opportunity and support to start fresh. Relevant records pertaining to the investigation, decision making, rational for the decision, duration of the suspension and any conditions attached will be retained in the school. The principal will inform the BOM of all suspensions, with the reasons and durations. The principal will report suspensions to NEWB in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion of a pupil is a very serious step and will only be taken by the Board of Management of the school in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will undertake significant steps to address the misbehaviour to avoid expulsion such as: -

- Meeting with the parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the student change their behaviour
- Make sure the pupil understands the consequences of their behaviour
- Other options have been tried
- Seek the support of other agencies

There may be exceptional circumstances where the BOM forms the opinion that the pupil should be expelled for a first offence. This may include: -

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff

- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault.

Given the seriousness of expulsion the BOM will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a pupil. These factors include: -

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension

The BOM will follow fair procedures when proposing to expel a student. The following steps will be taken in order to expel a pupil.

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the principal.

The principal will inform the parents and pupil in writing. The parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond.

2. The principal will make a recommendation to the BOM

The parents and pupil will be informed that the BOM will be asked to consider expulsion.

The principal will provide the parents and BOM with records of the allegations, investigation and written notice of the grounds on which the BOM is being asked to consider expulsion.

Parents will be notified of date of BOM hearing and be invite to that hearing. Parents will be advised that they can make a written or oral submission to BOM. Sufficient notice will be given to parents to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

3. The BOM will consider the principal's recommendation and hold a hearing

The BOM will undertake its own review of documentation and circumstances. Neither the principal nor the parents will be present for the board's deliberations.

4. BOM deliberations and actions following hearing

If the board decides to expel the pupil the BOM must write to Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and inform him/ her of its decision to expel the pupil and the reasons why. The pupil cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO

received the written notification form BOM. The parents will be informed about its conclusions and next steps i.e. that the EWO was informed.

#### 5. Consultations arranged by Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

Within 20 days of receipt of BOM letter the EWO must make reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the principal, parents, pupil and anyone else who may be of assistance. He/ she must convene a meeting with those parties who agree to attend.

Arrangements are made to continue the pupil's education, either at home, in another school or in this school.

#### 6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

After 20 days the BOM confirm the decision to expel. Parents are notified immediately and informed about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills and supplied with the relevant forms. An appeal may also be brought by NEWB on behalf of pupil. A formal record of the decision to expel will be made and kept by the BOM.

#### **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools will advise parents 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 or student (see Circular 22/02).

#### **Reference to other Policies**

Many other school plans and policies have a bearing on the code of behaviour including: -

- SPHE/ RSE Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Admission Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Accidents and Administration of Medicines Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Homework Policy

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- School Inclusion Policy
- Others

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the Code.

### **Principal's Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

### **Teacher's Responsibilities**

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

### **Non Teaching Staff Responsibilities:**

- Support the schools Code of Behaviour
- Show respect for all members of the school community

### **Pupil's Responsibilities**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid misbehaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books and homework to school.
- Follow school and class rules.

### **Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour. **Please ring (071) 9631774 or email [mohillns@gmail.com](mailto:mohillns@gmail.com) to make an appointment with teacher.**
- **As the Board of Management is responsible for Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises**

Each parent/guardian is advised to have a copy of the school Code of Discipline. . Parents are provided with a copy on enrolment and in accepting a place for their child they are accepting that they will abide by the Code of Behaviour and all school policies.

Children should know the school rules and should understand what will happen if their behaviour is not acceptable.

Status of the Code of Discipline: This code may be reviewed and/or revised as conditions may require. A copy of the revised edition will be uploaded to the school website and the school community will be notified in this event.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

This policy will be made available to school personnel and will be provided to the School Community. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the Patron if requested.



This policy will be reviewed as deemed necessary.

Signed : Fr. Nigel Charles, Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Maeve Heslin, Principal

Date: 16/04/2024