

Introductory Statement

This policy was developed in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders with the involvement of staff, parents and children of Goggins Hill N.S. in consultation with the Board of Management.

A representative committee including members of the Board of Management, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff was set up to review the code of behaviour in 2010.

In 2009 a questionnaire on the topic of behaviour was circulated to all families to elicit views of parents. There was a reasonable response level to this questionnaire and the findings formed part of the review process.

Rationale

- It is necessary to review our Code of Behaviour to ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
 - *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each child attending the school*
 - *The measures that shall be taken when a child fails or refuses to observe those standards*
 - *The procedures to be followed before a child may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned*
 - *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a child*
 - *And the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school*
- To ensure the existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.
- The Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with the Anti- Bullying Policy.
- The policy is subject to the provisions of the European Convention on the Rights of the Child

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The code of behaviour shall reflect the mission statement of Goggins Hill N.S.

Aims

Goggins Hill N.S. hopes to achieve the following through implementation of this policy.

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community

- To assist parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

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1. Guidelines for behaviour in Goggins Hill N.S.

The Education Welfare Act 1998 (as amended), Section 23, here in after called the Act, states that the code of behaviour shall specify “*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*”.

The standards of behaviour the school expects from the children are as follows;

- Each child is required to show reasonable consideration and mutual respect for other children and adults
- Each child is required to show respect for the school environment, property of the school and property of all members of the school community, including their own belongings
- Each child is required to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each child is required to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Each child is required to uphold these standards at all times while representing the school.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a child, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour and that the principal ‘*may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child*’.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

This policy, where possible, is based on a proactive rather than a reactive approach being taken.

The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include

- *An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony*
- *A teamwork approach to behaviour*
- *A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management*
- *An inclusive and involved school community*
- *A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy*
(Developing a Code of Behaviour, 2008)

The importance of taking a whole school approach to promotion of positive behaviour is paramount to the success of our Code of Behaviour. All policies are reviewed by Board of Management. Members of Staff have opportunities at staff meetings and planning days to develop a whole school approach to behaviour. Parents input in the form of representation by Parents Association members and children may contribute through the Student Council.

The success of the policy depends on standards being applied unilaterally to the whole school community, including staff, parents, children and visitors.

2.1 Staff

Teachers and other staff members play important roles in the review and updating of the code. They bring to this work, their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning; their experience and best practice of what works to help students to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community.

Staff review policies regularly and when a specific need/issue arises at staff meetings and school planning days.

All staff members are given the opportunity to view and input on the code of behaviour before ratification.

A copy of the ratified code of behaviour is available in the office and on the school website. Each member of staff will have an individual copy.

- The code of behaviour applies to all children, however for children who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their specific educational needs an Individual Educational Plan with behavioural targets will be implemented.

The school's Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

- A whole school approach to the teaching of SPHE is reviewed regularly. The plan is based on a bi-annual programme.

2.2 Board of Management

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management.

- The Board of Management is consulted in reviewing of the code of behaviour and amendments as deemed necessary are made at Board Meetings prior to ratification of the Code.
- There are procedures in place for the Board of Management to deal with serious breaches of behaviour as outlined in section 4 and 5 of this document.

2.3 Parents

Parents' involvement is an essential part of the review process. Their involvement draws on their expectations, insights and experience.

- On enrolment parents will be supplied with a copy of the Code of Behaviour. The policy is also available on the school website.
- Parents are required to support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour in the following ways;
 - Parents are required to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
 - Parents are required to encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
 - Parents are required to encourage their children to adhere to the school's code of behaviour
 - It is the responsibility of parents to make themselves aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
 - Parents are required to attend meetings at the school if requested
 - Parents are required to help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
 - Parents are required to ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
 - It is the responsibility of parents to communicate any concerns they have regarding their child. The child's teacher is the first point of contact in such instance
 - It is recognised that co-operation between staff and parents is essential for upholding this policy

2.4 Children

- Standards are reinforced at assembly, in the homework journal (school rules) and on enrolment (Copy of policy).
- Children create class rules in consultation with class teachers each year.
- Children from the senior classes can put suggestions through the Student Council. The Council will also provide feedback on the implementation of Code of Behaviour.
- Buddy systems; senior pupils help organise games for the junior pupils at lunch time on a volunteer rota.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

3.1 Classroom

- “Ground rules”/ behavioural expectations in each class are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and create a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Children input in devising the class rules annually.
- Teachers ensure that children understand and are frequently reminded of the standards of behaviour as set out in section 1.
- There is a clear and appropriate system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour.
- A variety of classroom management techniques, activities, methodologies and tools are employed to sustain children’s interest and motivation and thereby promote positive behaviour by the teaching staff.
- Where sanctions are imposed, they are clearly linked to the misbehaviour.

3.2 Playground

- A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and clearly identify what activities are permitted will be formulated. These rules will be displayed on the yard and will be reinforced at assembly and in class.
- There are two teachers on duty in the playground. They are assisted by SNAs whose primary role is in supervising the children in their care. They also bring any issues they may witness to the attention of the teacher on duty.
- All children must be visible on the playground at all times. Children are prohibited from entering the staff car park, the steps and grassy areas are strictly off limits.
- Children are prohibited from leaving the school grounds during the school day without the prior knowledge of class teacher and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. In such cases, parents are required to sign their child in and/or out of school. This is recorded in the main office.
- The yard is subdivided into a Junior and Senior area for safety and freedom of movement.
- There will be a designated skipping zone and quiet area.
- Playground games are taught to children, adapted to suit different class levels.
- On wet days there are three teachers on duty as well as SNAs.
- Selections of board games/ jigsaws/DVDs are available in each room for wet days.
- At the end of break children line up at their class door and wait for their teacher before re-entering the classroom.
- A toilet pass system is used by children who leave the playground to use the toilets
- Children with a written request from parents to remain inside due to illness etc. sit in a designated area during break time.

- If children misbehave on the playground they are given a verbal warning, if the misbehaviour continues they are requested to walk with the teacher on duty for 5 minutes or on the central line. Incidents are reported to the class teacher after break.
- Serious incidents of misbehaviour are recorded on the incident report form, reported to the principal, and appropriate procedures are followed (Section 6.2).

3.3 Other areas in the school

- Toilets; In the Senior Classes only one child at a time is given permission to use the toilets adjoining the classroom. In Junior classrooms this rule also applies in so far as is practical. This also applies to the use of hall toilets.
- If the Senior classes need to change for sporting activities, small groups change in either female or male wash area, as appropriate.
- Children use the cloakroom area in small groups or under supervision of a teacher, e.g. first thing in the morning, after lunch etc.
- Children are expected to walk at all times within the school building.
- Children are sent on errands in pairs.
- Rules and sanctions are communicated to children at assembly and in the classroom, particularly at the start of the year and at the start of terms. They are regularly reminded of these throughout the year.

3.4 School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour apply in any situation where children are still the responsibility of the school, e.g. school tours, games, extracurricular activities and other school-linked events.

In Goggins Hill NS the behaviour of our children is exemplary and is often commented on by those who come in contact with children representing our school.

Misbehaviour while on school outings is taken very seriously. In such cases, the child's behaviour may be reviewed before taking the child in question on subsequent outings.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

4.1 Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- Children's achievements are publicly applauded at assembly.
- Each class has individual and group rewards e.g. stickers, certificates, prizes, voucher system for golden time etc... These vary depending on the age of the children.
- Good news is communicated at assembly, through the school newsletter and in verbal/written communication with parents.

4.2 Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

Levels of intervention	
Support for all	Most students behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in school. Occasional, minor misbehaviour should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher.
Additional support for some students	Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing, behaviourally, socially and educationally. Additional inputs or interventions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the student • involving the Pastoral Care team • setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way • behaviour contracts.
Specialised support for a small minority of students	A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. They may have great difficulty in learning new behaviour and may not respond to low-level interventions. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. The Principal and staff should build good links with any local support services that may be able to assist in responding to the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties. Sources of support may include the National Educational Psychological Service, HSE Community Psychology Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, the National Council for Special Education, Child Guidance Services or Adolescent Mental Health Services. Schools must be cognisant of their obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 with regard to making reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities.

(NEWB, 2008, p.50)

As outlined above there are 3 levels of intervention.

Initially misbehaviour should be dealt with by class teacher by way of warning and/or advice but, if it is more serious or persistent, the principal and/or parents may be involved.

Should reasoning with the child fail to improve the behaviour the following strategies/sanctions, which shall include but not be limited to, may be implemented depending on the seriousness or type of misbehaviour.

- The teacher may instigate Temporary Removal from the group (in class), to be used in the interests of classroom management in order to ensure the learning of other children and to help the individual child to recognise and learn about the impact and consequences of their behaviour, (the removed child will remain under supervision).
- The teacher may instigate a Reflection sheet completed by child, signed by parents. (3rd class up) to allow the child reflect on their behaviour, the consequences of their actions and how they should behave in similar future situations.
- The teacher may instigate communication with parents where the incident/ misbehaviour is deemed serious or persistent.
- The teacher may instigate Withdrawal of privileges may be used if deemed appropriate
- The teacher may instigate carrying out a useful task in the school to foster respect for school property in consultation with the Principal.
- The teacher may organise 5/10 minutes co-operative play between children at lunch time to rebuild damaged relations through positive interaction.
- Children may be asked to complete unfinished/ unsatisfactory work at home and in this case parents will be asked to sign the work.

In applying sanctions the following will be taken into consideration;

- Sanctions are part of the plan to change behaviour.
- The student should be able to relate the sanction to the behaviour that prompted the imposition of the sanction
- Sanctions are used consistently
- Sanctions are proportionate
- Sanctions are appropriate

Following the discussion and implementation of sanction should the misbehaviour continue the matter will be referred to the Principal.

- The Principal facilitates support and/or a contract of behaviour which will be agreed with the class teacher, parents and the child where appropriate.
- Should matters persist or if the child poses a safety risk to himself or others a formal report to the Board of Management will be undertaken by Principal.
- Suspension (temporary)
- In instances of persistent/serious misconduct, children might not be brought on school outings.

It is recognised that factors influencing children's behaviour may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated.

In summary the ladder of intervention is as follows;

1. Class teacher
2. Principal
3. Board of Management

4.3 Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

- Communication with parents where the incident/ misbehaviour is deemed serious or persistent
- Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.
- The parents concerned may be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.
- A meeting can then be set up for a mutually convenient time.
- The student may be present for part of the meeting; this will be agreed by the teacher and parents.
- If a difference of opinion exists between parents and teacher, this should not be evident to the child.
- Parents will be involved at an early stage.
- Goggins Hill NS operates an open door policy.
- The first point of contact of a concerned parent should always be with the child's teacher.
- This should be arranged by appointment.
- Under no circumstance should the teacher be approached out of school hours regarding concerns.
- Parents will be informed of the procedures through this code of behaviour, through Parental Complaints Policy and on Parent Information evenings and it will be reinforced by teachers at parent-teacher meetings

4.4 Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

- Children who are considered emotionally disturbed are referred by the principal for psychological assessment in consultation with parents and other relevant agencies.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, ...
- S.E.N. personnel may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour.
- Specific Special Education teachers are assigned to act as mentors for particular children or in assisting teachers in the creation of individual behaviour plans and/or individual education plans for specific children.
- Ongoing professional development is available to staff through SESS, and the Education Centre.
- Criminal behaviour will be reported immediately to the relevant agencies and parents will be notified.
- All instances of perceived gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour will be reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, who will carry out a risk assessment and decide on appropriate action in consultation with the principal and other agencies.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or child will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

5. Suspension / Expulsion

“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 (and /or)

The student’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety (and /or)

The student is responsible for serious damage to property (and /or)

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

(NEWB, 2008)

5.1 Procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour

Before resorting to serious sanctions i.e. suspension or expulsion, parents will be notified of the incident(s) and that the matter is being reported to the Board of Management.

5.2 Suspension

Where there is an established instance of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend the school to meet the chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the child will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the child may be suspended for a prescribed period.

In accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Board of Management authorises the chairperson or principal to exclude a child or children from the school the maximum initial period of such suspension shall be three school days.

A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion of up to a period of ten school days to allow for consultation with the child's parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

5.3 Removal of Suspension

During a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the child reinstated to the school, which said application shall be considered by the Board of Management. If the Board of Management agree to the reinstatement then prior to reinstatement, the parent/s must give a satisfactory written undertaking that a suspended child shall behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the child's reinstatement shall not constitute a risk to the child's own safety or that of the other children or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the child if required and will re-admit the child formally to the class.

5.4 Expulsion

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, '*A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer*' (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '*...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.*' (Section 24(5))

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) as follows:

- (5) No child shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the Patron and unless alternative arrangements have been made for the enrolment of the child at another suitable school.

5.5 Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or children 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, the Board of Management will advise parents of this right of appeal and the associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a child. 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)

- The parents/guardians will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion, in writing, following the Board of

Management's decision to suspend. Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms.

- The chairperson in consultation with the Principal will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

6. Keeping records

- Teachers shall keep a record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive children.
- Records shall be written in a factual and impartial manner.
- A standard incident report form available from the school office shall be used to record incidents of misbehaviour.

6.1 Class level

- Teachers are expected to maintain incident reports for any serious misbehaviour. There is a standard form available from the office.
- Following discussion and implementation of sanction by class teacher, should the misbehaviour persist, the matter will be referred to the Principal.
- The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour.
- Parents are kept up to date during the year regarding behaviour issues should they arise.

6.2 Playground

- Supervising staff shall report misbehaviour to the class teacher after break and fill out an incident report for serious incidents. This is to be signed by class teacher before being filed by the Principal.
- Playground rules are displayed on the yard and referred to regularly to encourage consistency in the application and interpretation of the rules.
- Supervision policy and procedures are outlined in detail in the Supervision Policy.

6.3 School records

- Each teacher keeps individual records. These records are retained by class teacher securely. They are archived in a central location where the Principal has access to them.
- Factual reports of particular incidents, communication between school and home, with outside agencies and Board of Management as well as documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29 are retained by the school.

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

- Parents are required to notify the class teacher in writing of the reason for a child's absence stating the dates and reason for absence. The note must be signed and dated.
- If a child is absent for 3 or more consecutive days, the parent must contact the school
- If a child is absent for part of a school day e.g. for a dental appointment, then the parent/guardian is expected to write a brief explanation addressed to the class teacher, and sign child in/out in school office.
- Certificates for outstanding attendance are presented annually.

- The school use the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board.

8. Reference to other Policies

The following school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour

- SPHE plan
- Child Protection
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- Supervision Policy and Procedures

Success Criteria

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and children

Roles and Responsibility

- The BOM has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- All members of staff have a duty to ensure the policy is fairly and consistently applied.
- Parental support for the implementation is crucial.
- The children have a responsibility to make their best effort in complying with the Code of Behaviour.

Implementation Date of Revised Policy

This policy will be implemented by April 2014

Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated at 3 year intervals or sooner if deemed necessary.

Ratification & Communication

- The BOM officially ratified this policy on 26th of March 2014.
- The ratified policy will be available to view in the office, on the school website and a copy will be given to each family on enrolment.

List of References

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- European Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
 - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
 - (2) Suspension
 - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.
- Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer

