

## 1 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This Code of Behaviour was originally implemented in 2009. In 2018 a pilot phase took place to introduce changes such as a System of Affirmation and Restorative Practice.

Ref. also Health and Safety Statement

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for cooperation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can cooperate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

### 1.1 AIMS OF THE CODE

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

### 1.2 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.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- 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.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage *'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'*

A Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.

### 1.3 SCHOOL RULES

The Golden Rules (ref. Jenny Mosely) are there to help our school's moral values extend into every area of school life. They are a way of bringing concepts of morality and responsibility into the forefront of children's minds, enabling them to become more aware of their choices. In our experience children's ideas always fall into six areas of concern: to look after people physically, to care for people's emotions, to be the best you can be at work, to respect things, to respect people by listening to them and to be honest. To this end our 6 School Golden Rules are:

1. We are gentle
2. We are kind and helpful
3. We listen
4. We are honest
5. We work hard
6. We look after property

### 1.4 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 meaningful 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. 'Hand up' not 'Don't talk out of turn'). 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.

### 1.5 INCENTIVES

Part of the vision of Kilcolgan Educate Together is 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. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the

maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

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
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication

#### 1.5.1 KETNS SYSTEM OF AFFIRMATION

As part of promoting standards of excellence, Kilcolgan Educate Together has created a unique System of Affirmation. This allows us to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding behaviour. We have devised 7 categories for which children are awarded a WOW card, when they consistently display a particular character attribute or perform outstanding work in one of the following areas:

- Inclusion
- Independent Thought
- Compassion
- Respect
- Care
- Integrity
- Academic Excellence

WOW cards are recorded on an internal database and children can then bring them home to celebrate. When a child receives three WOW cards in a particular area, the child is awarded a certificate for that attribute. When a child is awarded a certificate for every attribute, they are awarded with an appropriate title. For Junior and Senior Infants, this is Amazing Acorn, for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class, this is Super Sapling and 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class aspire to achieve the title of Mighty Oak.

#### 1.6 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Kilcolgan Educate Together has categorised unacceptable behaviour into 4 broad categories:

1. Classroom Infraction – this includes speaking out at inappropriate times, engagement in off-task behaviour, inattentiveness, failure to complete and or submit assignments, interruption of teaching.
2. Minor Misbehaviour – this includes consistently speaking out at inappropriate times, consistent engagement in off –task behaviour, inattentiveness, consistent failure to complete and submit assignments, habitual interruption of teaching, consistent disagreement with teacher decisions
3. Serious Misbehaviour – this includes bullying (verbal, physical, relational, reactive), harassments, discrimination and victimisation, behaviour that demonstrates intent to hurt another, behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning, damage to property, theft

4. Gross Misbehaviour – this includes assault on a teacher (with intent present), assault on a pupil (with intent present), serious theft, serious damage to property.

#### 1.6.1 SANCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM INFRACTION

The use of sanctions or consequences in the classroom 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
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- 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. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal

However sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety.

*It was agreed at a meeting with parents on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 that detention at break time does not require prior notice to parents, but that detention at break time, where it is a natural consequence, is an acceptable method of sanction.*

#### 1.6.2 SANCTIONS FOR MINOR MISBEHAVIOUR

Where a pupil engages in minor misbehaviour that is of a moderately serious nature (e.g. pushing someone in a line) they will create an incident report. This will document what happened, and how such behaviour might be avoided. It will be sent home to be signed by parents. A pupil who has more than 2 'incidents' in a term will complete restorative practice for subsequent incidents.

Where a pattern of misbehaviour has been observed and recorded by the classroom teacher and where classroom interventions fail to result in changed behaviour, parents will be notified and the support team will be engaged. At this point the support team, class teacher, parents and, where appropriate, the child will devise a behaviour plan. This is a document that will allow everyone to work together towards agreed targets with very clear objectives, steps and consequences. The support team may also remove the pupil to monitor and support progress where this is appropriate.

### 1.6.3 SANCTIONS FOR SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR

Where pupils engage in behaviour that is considered serious, their parents will be contacted and they will be asked to take the child home. This will allow the pupil to reflect on their behaviour at home, it will keep them safe from repeating the behaviour and it will allow the school to support those affected by the behaviour. Behaviour that is considered serious will be run by at least two members of staff, one of these on the In School Management Team, usually the Principal, in order to ensure fairness.

When the pupil returns to school the next day, he or she will complete restorative practice with one of the in-school management team. This occurs during break time and is only complete when the student issues a letter of apology to those affected.

Following this the pupil is placed on a yellow card. This is a set period of time where there cannot be a repeat of the serious misbehaviour. If the behaviour repeats itself during this time, it results in automatic suspension. Yellow cards are generally one week for junior infants to 1<sup>st</sup> class, 2 weeks for 2<sup>nd</sup> class, 3 weeks for 3<sup>rd</sup> class, 4 weeks for 4<sup>th</sup> class, 5 weeks for 5<sup>th</sup> class and 6 weeks for 6<sup>th</sup> class. However, at the discretion of the principal, this can be increased or decreased.

Where a child is completing the third restorative practice in one year, the parents will be asked to attend a meeting to see what further supports are needed in order to help the child manage behaviour expectations.

### 1.6.4 WHAT IS RESTORATIVE PRACTICE?

Restorative practice is based on the idea that the best way to help someone who has made a choice that has negatively impacted others is to give them the opportunity to put things right. It works off the premise that the person is sorry for their part in what happened.

#### 1.6.4.1 WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Your child will be given a set of questions which are:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?

Where possible your child will complete as many of these questions as possible alone during his/her break time. A teacher from the In-School Management Team will be available to assist, to guide and to check the work afterwards. It may involve discussion and it may require more time than breaks times for one day.

At completion, your child will write an apology letter to those who require it. Your child will be supported in writing this letter. The apology will then be read out (in a private setting) to those affected.

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#### 1.6.4.2 IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Restorative practice should be enough for a child to reflect on their behaviour, accept responsibility for the behaviour, make amends and move on. Where children repeat behaviours that require restorative practices it is necessary to meet with parents in order to ensure that the child can succeed at every level in school. Therefore if a child is due to complete a third restorative practice in any given academic year, parents will be asked to attend a meeting in order to ensure that all avenues of support are explored to allow the child to participate fully in school life.

### 1.7 SUSPENSION

Where the school is considering suspension they will refer to the NEWB Publication [Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools](#) Chapter 10 and 11.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

#### 1.7.1 GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property or injury to another person/child.
- The student has repeated a serious misbehaviour while on a yellow card.

Note: A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening, or violent behaviour towards a member of staff will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. Where a child repeats a serious misbehaviour within a yellow card period, it will result in automatic suspension.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal and/or the Chairperson to exclude a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

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##### 1.7.1.1 PROCEDURES THAT ENSURE FAIRNESS WHEN EXCLUDING A PUPIL WILL INCLUDE:

- Ensuring other means of intervention and dealing with the behaviour has been tried where possible.
- Parents will have been invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude.

- A fair investigation will have taken place, taking both parents' and pupils' perspectives into account.
- Parents and student will be informed about the complaint.
- Parents and student will be given the opportunity to respond.
- Parents may be informed by phone or in writing (email).
- In the case of immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.

The BOM, before reaching the decision to exclude a pupil, will ensure its decision will be treated in an unbiased manner. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules of National Schools.

Following suspension, a plan to reintegrate the student will include, where possible, an arrangement for a member of staff to provide support during the re-integration process. Student contracts will, if necessary, be put in place for the student and his or her parents. This will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the students and parent/s. All efforts will be made to support the student to adhere to this contract. It will be expected that the parent/s will support and maintain support at all times for their child.

When an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. In the case of immediate suspension the parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to three days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

The National Education Welfare Board will be notified using the standard form if a student is suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days.

#### 1.7.2 IMPLEMENTING A SUSPENSION

The Principal shall notify Parents/Guardians, in writing, of the decision to suspend. The letter/ email will state:

- The period of suspension – beginning and end dates.
- Reasons for suspension.
- Any programme to be followed by student and/or parent.
- Arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by student and parents.
- Provision for an appeal to Board of Management.
- Right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DoES (Education Act 1998 section 29).

#### 1.7.3 APPEALING A SUSPENSION

Appeals must be made to the Board of Management. Parents have 24 hours within which to appeal a suspension. They may however indicate that they do not wish to appeal in order to allow the suspension to take immediate effect. This can help to minimise the distress to the child and maximise the impact of the sanction.

1. The grounds for the appeal must be made in writing.
2. The appeal will be considered at the next Board meeting or at an extraordinary meeting of the Board, which the parents/guardians can attend at a specific time, subject to giving notice in their letter of appeal of their intention to attend the meeting.
3. At the Board meeting, the Principal outlines the reasons for his/her recommendation.
4. The Parents' appeal is then heard by written submission and/or orally.
5. The Principal may take no further part in the discussion other than to clarify matters raised in the parents/guardians' appeal. The Principal and parents (if present) leave.
6. The Board makes its decision and communicates it to the parent/guardian.
7. The Board may agree that another sanction is applied

## 1.8 EXPULSION

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

### 1.8.1 AUTHORITY TO EXPEL

The Board of Management of Kilcolgan Educate Together NS has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority will be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

### 1.8.2 THE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as 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.

In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, school authorities will have tried a series of other interventions and must believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

### 1.8.3 EXPULSION FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management 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 will 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
- serious damage to property e.g. arson

### 1.8.4 PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPULSION

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

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel the student.

### 1.8.5 APPEALS

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

### 1.8.6 THE APPEALS PROCESS

The appeals process under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Skills). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and

the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance. Information on the Appeals process will be given to the child's parent/guardian.

#### 1.8.7 REVIEW OF USE OF EXPULSION

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

#### 1.9 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, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal 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.

#### 1.10 METHODS OF COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Emails
- School notice board (on website)
- Weekly update on the school website
- Website – class pages
- Text messages

## 1.11 RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy was first ratified for implementation by the Board of Management of Kilcolgan Educate Together on the 17.02.2009. It was revised and the revisions ratified on 12.09.19.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Kiran Sarma  
Chairperson