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Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of **Ballyfinane N.S** has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil;
6. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of **Ballyfinane National School** has been developed in accordance with 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

POLICY FORMULATION

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- I. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the Code of Behaviour within a specified time frame.
- II. Teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal.
- III. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
- IV. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- 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 wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils 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.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Pupils

General Behaviour

Each child is expected to:

- Be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual (School starts at 8.50 a.m.)
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Enter an absence or early leaving note on their Aladdin app.
- Bring healthy lunches to school. A small treat is permitted on a Friday.

Classroom behaviour

Each child is expected to:

- **R- Respect Everyone**
- **E- Everyone in a line**
- **S – Speak Kind Words**
- **P – Play Fair**
- **E – Everyone Stay Calm**
- **C – Call for Help**
- **T - Together we Grow**

The above is made known to the children in an appropriate way using child friendly language which is framed in a positive way.

Playground (Playing Pitches) Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- Follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- Remain – on the school grounds at all times
- Obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- Respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils.
- Avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling. Fighting for fun is strictly forbidden.

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow- his/her teacher's directions at all times
- Remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- Behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- Observe – the rules of general good behaviour

Your fellow students expect that you will:

- Not bully them
- Show acceptance and respect their differing personalities
- Never insult or belittle them because of differences.

- Respect their property
- Listen to them and acknowledge them
- Share equipment and resources with them
- Allow them to be part of the group
- Speak to them with courtesy and respect

Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching Staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- Discuss the CoB with their class in an age-appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour on their part are being recorded. (appendix 3)
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive Behaviour in school. Parents/Guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort. Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns. In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

Parents can expect to:

- Be treated with respect;
- Have a safe and welcoming environment for their child
- Obtain recognition for individual differences among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available
- Have fair and consistent procedures applied to the school's dealings with pupils
- Receive progress reports in accordance with agreed school policy (P.T. meetings and end of year reports)
- Receive information on school's policies and procedures

Parents are *expected* to:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time **(8.50am)** and that they are collected from school on time **(13.30 or 14.30)**
- Encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour
- Ensure their children have the correct books and materials
- Have their children's belongings labelled
- Read written communication received from the school and respond appropriately
- Report to the office if calling to the school during the day for any reason
- Make an appointment beforehand if they need to see a teacher
- To treat all members of the school community with respect
- To provide a note on Aladdin for all absenteeism
- Inform class teacher through Aladdin of any change to collection procedure for their children

- Help their children to learn and practice good behaviour and to have a positive attitude towards themselves, other people and towards the school
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others
- Communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour;
- Attend meetings at the school if requested
- Help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed.

SCHOOL RULES

In order to achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the following rules.

RESPECT AND COURTESY

All pupils are expected to treat staff and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy. Inappropriate behaviour i.e. rough play, bad language, fighting, personal remarks, pushing, kicking, and spitting will not be tolerated. School property and the property of others should be respected.

HEALTHY LUNCHES

Healthy lunches enable a child to work more efficiently i.e. sandwiches, fruit and yogurt. Cans, glass bottles, sweets and popcorn are discouraged.

- Crisps, fizzy drinks and chewing gum are not allowed.
- Nuts may be banned if required (if a child in the class has an allergy to nuts).
- Food must be eaten in the classroom. All wrappers and leftover food must be taken home.

HOMEWORK

- Homework is expected to be completed to the child's best ability.
- Checking and signing by parents/guardians on a daily basis is recommended.
- Incomplete homework must be explained in writing by a parent/guardian.

ATTENDANCE

- Each child is expected to be in school at **8.50am**, when the bell rings and children need to be collected promptly at home time.
- Pupils are expected to be present every day
- A note to explain all absences or early leaving should be written on Aladdin.
- Pupils leaving school early will be signed out through the Aladdin system.

MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL/ SCHOOL GROUNDS

- Entering and leaving the school must be done in an orderly manner.
- Children are asked to stand back and allow adults to pass. Be aware of others in passing and allow space for others to pass when moving around the school corridors / through doorways.
- Running is strictly forbidden in classrooms and on corridors. Cognisant of health and safety, walking in classrooms and on corridors is strongly encouraged. We do not promote running in these instances and discourage same. Children will be verbally prompted to walk in these areas at all times.

BREAK-TIMES

- Classroom/corridor/yard procedures are to be observed at all times.
- Re-entry to the school building during the breaks without permission of teacher/ yard supervisor is not permitted.
- When the bell rings to signal the end of break-time, pupils are to line up quietly and stand in an orderly manner until collected by teacher.
- During inclement weather children will remain indoors in their classrooms and may play with the games provided.

MOBILE PHONES / DEVICES

Mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal devices are not permitted by children in school. If children need to contact their parents the school phone may be used.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked that teachers be made aware of any additional needs which a child may have.
- Parent(s)/guardians(s) are asked to make an appointment for parent/teacher meetings.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to please check your child's hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice and treat if necessary.
- Requests to remain indoors during break times must be made in writing through email/Aladdin and signed by parent/guardian.
- All parents/guardians and visitors are required to report to the office.
- Children who are ill should not be in school.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The school will endeavour to create an environment where positive Behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive Behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor Behaviour so that not only good Behaviour but also improvement in Behaviour is acknowledged.

For Individuals, good behaviour may be acknowledged as follows:

1. A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
2. A word of praise in front of group/class
3. A mention to the principal;
4. A comment/smiley/sticker in the exercise book;
5. A certificate of achievement
6. A mention to parents (verbal or written);
7. A treat e.g., if terms of a behaviour contract are fulfilled.

School Rewards

1. A Group/Class treat such as:
2. Golden Time
3. Edible treat
4. Game Hour
5. Time given to preferred activity
6. Extra playtime
7. Garden Time
8. Positive note home
9. Reward from Principal

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 Behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and

how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by the teacher
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Time out in Calm Space
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact
- Behaviour contract

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as open circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parents/guardians or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date.

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention
- Report submitted to the Board of Management
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Suspension from school of one to five days depending on the severity of the behaviour
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal wellbeing of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap or ethnic origin.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Suspension from school for one to five days:**

This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- **Suspension from school for five to ten days:**

This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

- **Expulsion:**

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

‘Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an ‘Immediate Suspension’ to the Principal Teacher. An ‘Immediate Suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an ‘Automatic Suspension’ for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for

a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains the authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School**, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- Or
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- The duration of the suspension and the date 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a normal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident in the Board of Management will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply; Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- I. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- II. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than five school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given:

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision.

The letter will confirm:

- The duration 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion

‘A student is expelled from a school when the 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.’

Authority to Expel

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following will apply:

a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- i. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond

b) The Principal (or BoM nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ii. Ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- iii. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)(Appendix 3)

c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal (or BoM's nominee) recommendations and the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- i. As to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. That they may if they so choose to be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. The principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- iv. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for lesser sanction if they chose

d) Board of Management Deliberators & Actions following the hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board:

- i. Will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for its opinion
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer

- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the **twenty-day period** following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of **Ballyfinane National School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process; in this regard the following undertakings are given:

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **20/5/2025**

This policy will be reviewed on **May 2026**

Date of Review	Date of Review	Date of Review	Date of review
23/04/2024	29/03/2023	2022	14/10/2021

Signed: Mike Carroll
Mike Carroll
Chairperson of B.O.M.

Signed: Catherine O'Shea
Catherine O'Shea
Principal