**Donagh National School**

**Code of Behaviour**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy was formulated by the staff, the parents and the Board of Management of Donagh N.S. It was reviewed in Term 2, 2020. “Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools” was used as a guide. Feedback was sought from teaching staff and the P.A. It was ratified by the B.O.M. at its meeting on the 12th February 2020.

**Rationale**

The existing policy was due for review and amendment, thus ensuring an orderly climate for learning in our school. It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) for schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered in the school. It details in Section 23 (2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

* The standards of behaviour that shall be taken when a student attends the school
* The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
* The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled
* The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student
* The procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school

**Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Donagh N.S. believes that every child has the right to be educated in a calm learning environment. We endeavour to provide a harmonious environment in which we, as educators, nurture the potential of our children. A successful and working code of behaviour, we believe, is only achieved by co-operation between staff, parents/guardians and pupils.

**Aims**

* To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement.
* To create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and 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/guardians 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.

**Principles**

* The school recognizes the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences.
* It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents/guardians and pupils.
* Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.

**School** **Rules**

1. Pupils should be careful coming to and going from school, always walking to and from buses/cars.
2. Pupils should always walk while in the school building.
3. Pupil should remain seated at all times while eating lunch.
4. Pupils should always show respect for their fellow pupils and adults.
5. Parents/guardians should provide a note/email of explanation following absences.
6. Pupils should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher.
7. Adults are to be addressed respectfully.
8. Pupils must obey directives regarding where to walk and where to play.
9. Pupils must not bring chewing gum, lollipops or fizzy drinks to school. Mobile phones/electronic devices are not permitted.
10. Pupils are expected to treat all visitors to the school with courtesy and respect.
11. Children travelling to alternative destinations after school should have a note to the class teacher stating alternative arrangements.

**Rules for caring for myself**

* I will respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
* I shall arrive punctually to school.
* I should show respect for my school and wear the complete school uniform every day.
* I should be aware of my personal cleanliness.
* I should bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school.
* I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

**Rules for caring for others**

* I should be kind and respectful to school staff and fellow pupils by being mannerly, polite and taking turns.
* I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
* I should keep my school clean by putting any litter in the appropriate bin.
* I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
* I should be truthful and honest at all times.

**Bullying**

Donagh National School aims to be a bully free zone.

**Rules regarding bullying:**

* I should never bully others.
* If bullying happens to me I will do my best to tell my parents/guardians and my teacher.
* Bullying is always unacceptable.

Please refer to Anti-Bullying policy for details of procedures to follow.

**Strategies for encouraging positive behaviour**

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

* A quiet word or gesture to show approval
* 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
* Reward systems in the classroom
* Golden Time:30 minutes, each week.

**Procedures**

**Unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows:**

* Reasoning with pupils
* Verbal reprimand
* Temporary separation from peers
* Removal of privileges (e.g. loss of Golden Time)
* Prescribing extra work
* Carrying out a useful task in school
* Communication with parents – written/verbal
* Referral to Principal
* Formal report to the Board of Management
* Suspension
* Expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88)

A staged approach to dealing with bad behaviour may be used depending on the nature of the misbehaviour. The aim is to change the behaviour and allow the child to take responsibility for their actions.

**Parents’/Guardians’ Role**

The P.A. was consulted when we reviewed this policy and new parents are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour at enrolment. A copy of the code of behaviour is also available to view on the school website [www.donaghns.ie](http://www.donaghns.ie). Parents can support the policy by:

* Encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
* Ensuring they are aware, of and cooperate, with the school’s rules and systems of rewards and sanctions.
* Attending meetings at the school, if requested
* Taking an active interest in their child’s homework and signing the Homework Schedule each night, ensuring that it is completed.
* Providing a note/email of explanation, following a child’s absence.

**Involving Parents/Guardians in Management of Problem Behaviours**

Parents/Guardians should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. We agree that it is better to involve parents/guardians at an early stage rather than as a last resort. The staff will contact parents/guardians when there is a concern about a child’s behaviour. Parents/guardians are also consulted when various strategies are not effective for managing the child’s behaviour.

**Examples of minor misdemeanours**

* Interrupting class work
* Arriving late for school
* Running in the school building
* Talking in class
* Leaving seat without permission
* Not wearing correct uniform
* Being discourteous/unmannerly
* Copying other children’s work
* Not completing homework without good reason
* Not having homework diary signed by a parent
* Endangering self/fellow pupils in the school yard at break

**Examples of serious misdemeanours**

* Consistently breaking rules
* Constantly disrupting in class
* Telling lies
* Stealing
* Damaging property belonging to another pupil
* Bullying
* Back answering a teacher
* Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
* Not working to their full potential
* Using unacceptable language
* Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil
* Defacing and destroying school property

**Examples of Gross Misdemeanours**

* Setting fire to school property
* Deliberately leaving taps on
* Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil.

**Managing Aggressive or Violent Misbehaviour**

* If a child is presenting as aggressive, the staff may work with the SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser), NEPS (National Educational Psychologist Services) and HSE (Health Service Executive) to find strategies to deal with the behaviour, manage aggression and protect other children, staff and parents/guardians.
* Children may be referred for a psychologist assessment.
* The SESS/NEPS may be contacted to provide training for staff.

**Suspension/Expulsion Procedures**

See pages 65-86 (NEWB: Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools in order to comply with legal and procedural requirements.) The Education Welfare Act, 2000 stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from a school and the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.

**Suspension**

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil. Suspension is defined as ‘Requiring the student to absent him/herself from the school for a specified, limited number of school days’. Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Other interventions will have been tried before suspension. The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as

* The student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
* The students continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
* The student is responsible for serious damage to property
* A single incident of serious misdemeanour may be grounds for suspension

The Board of Management will notify the parents/guardians in writing of the decision to suspend their child and the letter will confirm

* The period of suspension and dates on which suspension will begin and end
* The reason for the suspension
* Any school work to be followed
* The arrangements for returning to school, including commitment to be entered into by the pupil and the parents/guardians
* The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
* The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Following a suspension period, the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. The school will then expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all the other pupils.

**Expulsion**

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

Before expelling a pupil, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including as appropriate:

* Meeting with parents/guardians and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
* Making sure that the pupil 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

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a student requires serious grounds such as:

* The student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
* The students continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
* The student is responsible for serious damage to property

The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

* A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
* Actual violence or physical assault against another student or member of staff
* Sexual assault

**Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences from school**

The Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 18) stipulates that parents/guardians must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for the absence. All notes detailing absences will be stored in the child’s file. If a pupil reaches a total of twenty days absence in the school year, Tusla must be notified.

**Success Criteria**

The success of this policy will be evaluated through

* Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playgrounds and school environment
* Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
* Positive feedback from school staff, parents/guardians and pupils

**Review and Evaluation**

This plan has been read and ratified by all members of the Board of Management. Review of this will take place every three years or earlier if necessary.

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

(Principal)

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(Chairperson, Board of Management)

**Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_