

Ballybay Central National School

Kiltoom
Athlone
Co. Roscommon

R: 19534S
T: (090) 648 9220
E: office@ballybaycns.ie

Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy

Overview

The aim of primary education may be stated as:

- a. To enable the pupil to live a full life as a pupil.
- b. To equip him/her to avail himself/herself of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.

The staff members are committed to the realisation of these aims. The board of management of the school is committed similarly. Parents of the pupils in this school have been strongly supportive of these aims for many years. The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. This means a strong sense of community in our school and a high level of co-operation among staff, pupils, parents, the Board of Management.

This code has been formulated in accordance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000,¹ and 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (NEWB/TUSLA).² formulation and review of this code involved the Board of Management, staff, and Parents' Association. In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

The aim is to ensure the individuality of each pupil is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each pupil to education in a relatively disruptive-free environment.

The Code of Discipline Aims to Achieve:

- a. The efficient operation of the school.
- b. The structuring of discipline, which promotes an efficient and stimulating environment.
- c. The maintenance of good order and safety throughout the school day, including break times, sport activities, all movements between classes and at all times representing the school.
- d. The development of self-discipline in all pupils and care and courtesy towards others.
- e. The development of respect for school buildings, all school property and the general school environment.

Principles of our Discipline Policy

a. Our policy is based on the principles of caring, fairness, respect, tolerance, compassion and courtesy. Staff shall consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of pupils within sight or sound of them and shall respond promptly and firmly to any incident of unacceptable behaviour. Implementation of discipline in general shall be a team effort – every member of staff has the right to correct any pupil in school whether that pupil is a pupil in his/her class or not.

b. If our school is to achieve a happy, secure environment where the pupil can develop and learn to the full potential, a positive, friendly, caring and encouraging atmosphere will provide a framework which constructs behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour that is dangerous to oneself, others or which may be disruptive or anti-social. Therefore every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. Teachers shall talk to pupils regularly, during class time about rules and the reasoning behind them.

¹ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/22/section/23/enacted/en/html>

² http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf

- c. The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. The agreed code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by the teachers.
- d. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between pupils and the need to accommodate these differences.

A - General

1. Respect and courtesy

Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner, both to themselves and all others. They are expected to treat all other pupils, all members of staff and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times and whenever representing the school. The use of any vulgarity or offensive language is unacceptable.

2. Punctuality

Pupils must be on time for school every day and must return to class punctually after breaks. The official opening time of the school is 9.20 a.m. Class for infants ends at 2.00 p.m. and class for all others ends at 3.00 p.m. **No responsibility is accepted for pupils outside these times.** Those collecting pupils from school should always be punctual. Lateness causes great anxiety, especially for younger pupils.

3. Safety when entering or leaving the school

Parents and pupils must enter and exit from the school via the front gate only (See Covid-19 Response Plan for changes to entrance/ exit points, implemented during the pandemic). Pupils must **walk**, when entering or leaving the school.

4. Cyclists

Cyclists must dismount, place their bicycles in the designated area and walk when entering or leaving the school.

5. Attendance and absences

Parents/Guardians must account for every absence of a pupil from school by forwarding a written note or email. If a pupil has to leave school early or be absent from school for a part of the day, a written note must be forwarded to the class teacher in school. Parents/Guardians will be asked to use the 'sign out' book when collecting their children early. This is to ensure, as far as possible, the safety of pupils throughout school hours.

6. Illness

Anything contagious, (i.e. measles, slapped cheek etc.) should be notified to the school immediately. Pupils should return to school only when fully recovered.

7. Personal property

Pupils must have their names on their coats and all personal property such as school books and copies, etc.

8. School property

Pupils must respect all school property and treat all schoolbooks and equipment with care. Parents will be held accountable for the cleaning, repair or replacement of any school property or equipment wilfully damaged or vandalised by their pupils.

9. School environment

Pupils must keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils are expected to co – operate fully in any organised clean – up activities.

B – Behaviour in Class

1. Pupils must have all books, materials and equipment as required. A schoolbook rental scheme is available from Third to Sixth Class presently. These rented books must be cared for and returned in good condition for re-rental.
2. All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability. Written work must be presented neatly.
3. Respect and courtesy are basic to classroom behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils, towards a teacher or coach or BOM approved personnel or towards any member of staff or any visitor to the school is unacceptable.
4. Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with this right, e.g. regular disruption of class or persistent distraction of others is unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully with their teachers' instructions as given so that an effective education programme can be undertaken.

5. Pupils should wear the correct uniform each day and whenever representing the school.

6. Summary of classroom behaviour

- a. Nobody is allowed outside the classroom before the bell is rung unless on a message for a teacher.
- b. Stand back or open the door for teacher or adult or other pupils.
- c. Knock before entering another classroom.
- d. Pupils leave and return to the classroom in an orderly manner (see Addendum). Pupils must never run within the school building for their own safety and the safety of others.
- e. Tables and work areas must be tidied each evening.
- f. Writing on school property is strictly forbidden. First to sixth class pupils must clean up any writing themselves.
- g. Pupils must greet school visitors politely and give full replies to questions.

C – Behaviour out of Class

1. Pupils should treat others the way they wish to be treated. Senior pupils are expected to lead by example. Pupils must behave in an orderly manner at all times. Children should not run around corners, this is to ensure the safety of themselves and all others.

2. Pupils must not behave in any way that endangers others or themselves. Members of staff will seek to ensure that standards of safety are observed and shall prohibit games or activities considered dangerous. Directions given by any member of staff on these matters are to be followed implicitly.

3. Pupils are required to play in their designated yard areas. Pupils who misbehave will be required to take time out from play, in a designated location at the discretion of the supervising yard teacher. Pupils may not go into neighbouring fields or onto the road without the permission of the supervising teacher. This includes re-entering the classroom.

4. All pupils are required to line up promptly and in an orderly manner at the end of breaks. There should be no playing or any horseplay when classes are in line.

5. No playing with a ball or running allowed when in line.

6. Summary of playground behaviour:

- a. No roughness, fighting, kicking, striking, punching, spitting tripping, bullying, name calling or verbal abuse in the schoolyard.
- b. Pupils are not allowed to stay indoors during breaks except on wet days. A pupil who has been sick should have written permission from his/her parent(s) to stay indoors.
- c. Pupils are not allowed back into the classroom during breaks unless to go to the toilet or in an emergency(illness, injury, etc.)
- d. No cycling in the playground at any time.
- e. Pupils must never interfere with other pupils' bicycles.
- f. Pupils must walk to the gate after school.
- g. No pupil must throw litter or food in the yard.
- h. Pupils must not pet stray dogs.
- i. Pupils must not swing on the goal posts.
- j. Use of bad language is not tolerated in school.

D – Homework

Pupils receive homework each night, as appropriate to their class and ability. In general, no homework is given on Fridays. Pupils are expected to complete this assigned work.

E – Accidents

The school yard is always supervised at break times. A pupil involved in an accident or hurt in any way must report to the teacher on duty. The teacher may decide to attend to the injury or to contact the parent(s) if necessary. In the event of the pupil needing urgent medical attention, the teacher on yard duty will inform the principal teacher and act accordingly. Accidents must be recorded on the School Incident Book. Serious accidents are recorded on the school's Incident Report Form.

F – Acceptable/ Unacceptable Behaviour

1. Rewards for acceptable behaviour

The following are some ways of showing appreciation for acceptable good behaviour, which are in operation in the school: Oral praise, written praise, pupils to be given jobs/responsibilities that they like, pupils to be given small prizes, merit lists, merit star and reduction in homework.

2. Minor unacceptable behaviour

Examples are as follows:

Talking out of turn in class, leaving their seat without permission (if due to inclement weather, pupils are in class for breaks, safety is paramount and this behaviour is considered serious), copying work from others, not sharing with others when instructed by a teacher to do so, not completing school tasks, laziness, not completing homework without a valid reason, entering classrooms during lunchtime without permission, not wearing correct uniform and being indifferent or showing a poor attitude.

3. Serious unacceptable behaviour

Examples are as follows:

Making rude signs or annoying gestures, using bad language, deliberately wasting time, littering the building or school grounds and leaving designated play areas without permission, and repeated patterns of Minor Unacceptable Behaviour (See 2. above).

4. Very serious unacceptable behaviour

Examples are as follows:

Bullying³ as prescribed in statute and/or threatening others, making abusive, insulting, offensive or insolent remarks, laughing or jeering at others mistakes or disabilities, using a mobile phone, leaving the school grounds without permission, wilful damage to school buildings, furniture, books, equipment or the property of others, fighting, showing disrespect to teachers, other school employees and visitors, disrupting lessons by cause of distraction, shouting, being generally rowdy, aggressive, rough, spitting, disturbing other pupils at work and being disobedient or defiant.

Summary of sanctions for any unacceptable behaviour as set out in this policy.

The following selection of strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- a. Teacher/pupil chat
- b. Reprimand and advice on how to improve
- c. Prescribing additional work (weekend homework, especially relating to their behaviour)
- d. Name of pupil and description of misbehaviour to be recorded in teacher's notebook
- e. Comment for parent(s) in homework notebook or in copy regarding lack of effort, constant disruption or unacceptable behaviour.
- f. Principal/pupil chat
- g. Teacher notifies parent(s) by telephone or by letter
- h. Teacher calls in parent(s) and reports outcome to the principal
- j. Principal discusses matter with parent(s)
- k. Principal refers matter to Board of Management where the principal and the chairperson discuss the matter with the parent(s)
- l. Temporary removal to another classroom

Sanctions will be proportionate to pupil(s) concerned, the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, and will distinguish between the types of unacceptable behaviour as listed in this policy document. The following consideration will apply:

- a. The frequency, duration and persistence of the behaviour
- b. Whether it is part of an escalating pattern of poor behaviour
- c. The context of the behaviour
- d. Whether pupils involved have special needs

³ Bullying is as defined at paragraph 2.1 of the Anti-Bullying procedures for primary and post primary schools which includes cyber bullying.

5. Gross Misconduct

This is where

- a student's behaviour has had or continues to have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- a student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- a student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Note: a single incident may constitute Gross Misconduct

6. Positive Encouragement and Reinforcement

Positive encouragement and reinforcement is regarded as primary, in helping pupils to develop responsibility, a positive attitude and self-discipline. However, where a pupil wilfully disregards school rules and infringes on the rights of others to participate in an ordered and structured learning environment sanctions may be needed. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school lies with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for the good order within the school. A pupil will be referred to the principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

7. Records

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of the student

8. Communication with Parents

Before resorting to serious sanctions, the normal channels of communication between school and parent(s) will be utilised. Parent(s) will be involved at an early stage rather than a last resort. Communication with parents(s) will be verbal or by letter, depending on the circumstances. The parent(s) concerned will be invited to the school to discuss their child's case. For gross misconduct, suspension will be considered. School staff members have a right to be treated with in a respectful and temperate manner.

9. Meeting with Parents

Where there are repeated instances of unacceptable behaviour the chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed by the principal and the parents will be requested to attend the school to meet the principal and the chairperson. If the parent(s) do not give an undertaking that their child will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period.

11. Involving the Gardai

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardai who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The Juvenile Liaison Officer may be contacted in such circumstances by the Principal in respect of advice or support for both student and school as may be appropriate.

G- Suspension

1. Suspension: Grounds

The decision to suspend a student will be on grounds of **Gross Misconduct** where:

- a student's behaviour has/ had or continues to have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- a student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- a student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

2. Suspension: Authority

The Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School has the authority to suspend a student.

The Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School has the authority to remove a suspension for any reason.

The Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School has delegated the authority in respect of suspension to the Principal of Ballybay Central National School pursuant to paragraph 11.1 of the *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (NEWB/TUSLA)*. This delegation was ratified at the Board of Management meeting on October 3rd 2016.

3. Suspension: Procedure

The Principal and Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School will abide by the fair principle procedures pursuant to paragraph 11.5 of the *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (NEWB/TUSLA)*.

In cases of **Gross Misconduct** warranting suspension:

- The parents and student will be informed in writing or verbally-where necessary, about the matter.
- The parents and student will be informed of the School Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy and where necessary provided with a copy.
- The parents and student will be informed that the matter will be investigated and could result in suspension.
- The parents and student will be afforded the opportunity to respond in respect of all aspects of the matter before a decision is made.
- The parents will be notified in writing of the decision to suspend.
- The notification will in addition set out:
 - The period of suspension;
 - The commencement date;
 - 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 student and the parents;
 - 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 pursuant to section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

This is without prejudice to the authority of the Principal of Ballybay Central National School who may in exceptional circumstances consider an immediate suspension necessary where there is a serious threat to the safety of students or staff.

In such cases warranting immediate suspension:

- A formal investigation will follow the imposition of the suspension.
- All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension.
- Parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed pupil referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also from services within the wider community i.e. Community Care Services provided by the Health Services Executive

4. Suspension: Periods

A student may not be suspended for more than 3 days, save for exceptional circumstances, as may be determined by the Principal where a longer period may be required in order to achieve a particular objective.

Any proposed suspension period in excess of 3 days shall be referred by the Principal to the Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School for consideration and approval by the Board of Management. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension.

Pursuant to section 21(4) of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

Any proposed suspension period which would cumulatively bring the number of days suspended in any school year to 20 days or more, shall be formally reviewed by the Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School.

5. Suspension: Appeals

A decision by the Principal to suspend a student may be appealed by the Parents of said student to the Board of Management.

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2007)*).

6. Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

The parent/s (and pupil) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff and will not have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

7. Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management shall review the use of suspension annually to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies and that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

H –Expulsion

1. Expulsion: Authority

The Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School has the authority to expel a student.

Expulsion is an option in extreme cases and will be utilised in accordance with Section 12 of the terms of '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' (*NEWB/TUSLA*).

The Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School will take all necessary steps to address the issues and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student
- Making sure 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 as set pit under Section 12.2 of the '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*' (*NEWB/TUSLA*).

The Board of Management of Ballybay Central National School will have exhausted and considered all other interventions, and will have formed the view that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

2. Expulsion: Grounds

The decision to expel a student will be taken where:

- a student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- a student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- a student is responsible for serious damage to property

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed pupil referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also from services within the wider community i.e. Community Care Services provided by the Health Services Executive.

3. Procedure for Expulsion

- A detailed investigation shall be carried out by the Principal.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management shall be made by the Principal
- The Board of Management shall consider the recommendation
- The Board of Management shall consider a hearing.
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

4. Appeal

At the time when parents are being formally notified of an expulsion, they and the student are told about their right to appeal in accordance with Section 12.5 of *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB/TUSLA)*.

1 – Communications

1. Home – School

Parents are always welcome to make an appointment to meet teachers. An introduction meeting is held each summer for parents of children about to start school in September. Parents of pupils transferring from other schools are welcome to these meetings.

2. Parent - Teacher Meetings

Formal meetings are arranged on specific days each year when parents are assigned a specific time to discuss their child's progress with the teacher. Parents are always welcome by appointment at any other time.

3. Absences

When a pupil is absent from school, a note or email must be sent in to the teacher or school office (by the parent or guardian) explaining their absence, prior to or on the day the pupil returns to school and in any event, as soon as possible.

This policy was devised by the staff and Board of Management, and ratified by the Board, pursuant to Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, on 15th December 2020. It will be reviewed again as per the school's policy review plan.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson BOM