

NEWBRIDGE EDUCATE TOGETHER CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

RATIONALE

It is a requirement under section 23 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 (see [Error! Reference source not found.](#)~~Appendix A – Section 23 Education (Welfare) Act 2000~~) that the Board of Management of a school must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- B. The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

To support the above the school also must have

- A defined procedure of recording behaviour, specifically failures in observing the standards required

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- The Positive Language Policy
- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Procedure for handling concerns and complaints

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- Allow the school to function in an orderly way where all children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- Assist staff, parents / guardians and students in understanding the policies, systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Conduct and to ensure their co-operation in the application of these policies and procedures
- Ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- Ensure the educational environment is guided by our Educate Together ethos
- Create an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, open-mindedness and consideration for others
- Promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate and accept these differences

Only the Board of Management can authorise any changes to the content of this policy.

WHERE DOES THE POLICY APPLY?

The standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour policy applies in the school and in any situation where the student, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

Where a student is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school, a judgement will be made that there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work, before the code of behaviour applies. The school authorities may need to get legal advice on this where the situation is complex.

1. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR REQUIRED IN THE SCHOOL

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;

In Newbridge Educate Together National School each student is expected to:

- ✓ Be well behaved and to show respect for self and others, and to show kindness and willingness to help others.
- ✓ Attend school regularly and punctually.
- ✓ Do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- ✓ Have everything needed for class and to keep his/her personal space and belongings tidy.
- ✓ Show a readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and to show and practice forgiveness.

Some examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours are shown below:

Positive (Acceptable Behaviour)	Negative (Unacceptable Behaviour)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggressive and intimidating physical behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindness / Willingness to help others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threatening behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respecting staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bullying / Harassment/ Discrimination / Victimisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respecting other students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class disruption, interfering with teaching or learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courtesy / Good manners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncooperative behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theft
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shouting/raising voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bad language/verbal abuse

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Positive (Acceptable Behaviour)	Negative (Unacceptable Behaviour)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberately excluding others
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness to listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer group pressure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness to seek help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imitation and mocking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular school attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property damage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good Personal Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threatening the safety of others or exposing others to danger and or harm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good sportsmanship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairness	

Note: [Some behaviour may need to be considered under Children First Guidelines 2011](#)

Promoting positive behaviour

In NETNS we recognise that positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between students, staff and parents/guardians and the ways in which students, staff and parents/guardians treat each other as per our Positive Language Policy and Dignity in the Workplace policy.

Co-operation and communication between staff and parents/guardians is actively encouraged through a variety of methods including formal meetings, informal meetings, written communication and information packs.

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

Each parent/guardian will be provided with a copy¹ of the Code of Behaviour to discuss with their child/children. By enrolling your child in our school you are accepting the Code of Behaviour policies of the school.

[During the first term a Code of behaviour day](#) will be held in the school. As part of this [day, that](#) night's homework will involve both parent/guardian and child reading [and](#) discussing [aspects of](#) the Code of Behaviour which will be available on the school website or available from the secretary's office upon request.

¹ [The Code of Behaviour will be available on the school website or available from the secretary's office upon request.](#)

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS

Adults in the school have a responsibility to model the student's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting students to behave according to these standards. Adults are expected to adhere to all code of behaviour policies including Positive Language Policy and Dignity at Work Policy.

The ways in which parents / guardians and teachers interact will provide students with a model of good working relationships.

STAFF

Staff will:

- Treat all students, parents / guardians and other staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Promote positive behaviour throughout the school and do their utmost to create a positive environment.
- Adhere to school policies including the Code of Behaviour and related policies.
- Prepare behaviour management plans. Each teacher will prepare a specific Behaviour Management Plan for their class. This will be reviewed and where necessary revised on a term by term basis.
- Encourage students to uphold the schools ethos and Code of Behaviour
- Encourage students to respect all members of the school community
- Show good example to students especially on the school premises by ensuring their own behaviour is exemplary and does not contravene school rules, e.g. no smoking within the grounds.
- Make themselves aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions

PARENTS / GUARDIANS

The school needs the support of parents/guardians in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.

Parents/Guardians are informed about the Code of Behaviour and their part in supporting it, at new parents meetings, at curriculum meetings and through information packs.

Parents / guardians will

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- Treat all students, staff and other parents / guardians in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Promote positive behaviour throughout the school and do their utmost to create a positive environment.
- Support their children with homework and ensure that it is completed and signed nightly
- Attend meetings at the school if requested
- Make themselves aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
- Ensure their children are in school daily and on time
- Encourage their children and empower their children (in line with developing independent thinking) to:
 - Uphold the schools ethos and Code of Behaviour
 - Respect all members of the school community
 - Ensure they have the necessary books and materials to complete their schoolwork and take part in school activities.
 - Show good example to students, teachers and parents / guardians especially on the school premises by ensuring their own behaviour is exemplary and does not contravene school rules.
 - To follow the rule in relation to safe access through the car park to the school playground and assembly area and by ensuring that they do not run between traffic themselves to get to the school gate.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management of NETNS will

- Treat all students, parents / guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Support the Principal and staff of the school in the application of the Code of Behaviour and sanctions used.
- Review the Code of Behaviour on a regular basis and support other reviews of the policy as necessary.

- Facilitate and support the revision and implementation of any updated policy.

2. STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

B the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;

Misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or may pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.

Our policy is to intervene early and positively when student behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

The school will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour.

ENSURE UNDERSTANDING

- Teachers and parents / guardians will ensure that students understand how they are expected to behave
- The adult members of the school community will understand how they themselves are expected to behave.
- The school will ensure that a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding acceptable behaviour and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour is in place.

STRATEGIES AND SANCTIONS:

The purpose of sanctions is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping students to:

- learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- understand (in ways appropriate to their age and development) that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Strategies (in no particular order or sequence) used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour by students are:

Informal	Formal (Documented)
• Reminding student (reflection)	• Reprimand (may include a warning)
• Reasoning with the student	• Withdrawal from classroom
• Advising on how to improve	• Communication with parents / guardians - (recorded)
• Accepting responsibility	• Referral to external support
• Withdrawal from peers	• Meeting with parents / guardians
• Loss of privileges (Golden time)	• Incident Report Forms (Staged Actions)
• Referral to internal support staff	• Suspension
	• Expulsion

Items in the formal column may be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

RESPONSES TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR – INCLUDING APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

- Initially the teacher by way of warning and/or advice will deal with misbehaviour but, if behaviour is more serious or is persistent, the Principal will be informed and the parents / guardians involved.
- The teacher will phone home to advise parents/ guardians of the following: repeated inappropriate behaviour, unacceptable behaviour and aggressive behaviour.
- Parents/ Guardians will then be encouraged to work with their child and the school to aid their child to follow the code of behaviour.
- Should a phone call be unanswered, the school will leave a voicemail and you should return the call at your earliest convenience.

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- In the case of gross misdemeanours the Principal will be informed immediately. The Principal will inform the Board of Management of every incidence of gross misdemeanour. The case may also be referred to Board of Management for consultation. Repeated unacceptable behaviour may be reported to the Board of Management.
- All of the staff (including Principal, Deputy Principal Class teachers, Special Educational Needs teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Classroom Assistants) have a shared responsibility in operating the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Visiting staff, student teachers, coaches and extra-curricular personnel are expected to abide by the NETNS Code of Behaviour.
- The staff member who has dealt with or observed misbehaviour will communicate incidents of notable misbehaviour to the class teacher.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs.
- Individual Behaviour Management Plans may be needed to help a student with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student.
- Teachers will take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of a sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

INVOLVING PARENTS / GUARDIANS IN MANAGEMENT OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

- Parents / guardians are encouraged to contact the class teacher if they have concerns about the behaviour of their child or the impact of the behaviour of other adults or children is having on their child. This may be done by making an appointment through the school office.
- If a parent/ guardian wish to make an allegation regarding another pupil it must be submitted in writing to the school.
- Recognition is made within the Code of Behaviour for the effect unacceptable behaviour may have on third party individuals and/or groups. Please follow the above step.
- Upon making a complaint, the parent/guardian making the complaint will be contacted by the class teacher to arrange a meeting. Following on from that meeting, the class teacher will remain in contact with the parent/guardian making the complaint to keep them informed of any strategies being used to

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

modify the behaviour and relay any improvements until a resolution has been reached to the satisfaction of all parties.

- If an allegation is made about a child the parents/ guardians of the child will be informed.
- All parties will work with the school to reach and resolution. The school will keep the parents/ guardians informed of any progress/ changes in behaviour.
- In the event of there being no perceived change in the behaviour after contacting the class teacher, the parent/guardian should contact the school principal to discuss the matter further. After a period of time, agreed by the parent/guardian and principal, if the parent/ guardian do not feel the issue has been resolved they should make contact with the Board of Management.
- In the case of a serious incident of misbehaviour or persistent misbehaviour, the class teacher will contact parents / guardians, in writing. The Principal may also contact the parent in writing.
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Principal, Deputy Principal, class teacher or Special Educational Needs teacher will contact parent/guardian in writing.
- A meeting between the teacher and parents / guardians will be organised. The Principal may also be present and the child may be included at some stage of the meeting

MANAGING AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT MISBEHAVIOUR

- Parents / guardians and teacher will need to work together to help the student to modify behaviour and to work towards changing it. This will involve the Principal and other in-school supports.
- External specialised assistance may be required (with the consent of parent) for students who display emotional behavioural disturbance in school.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the student himself/herself or the safety of other students or staff, steps will be taken to distance the student from the immediate environment of other students and the Principal will be notified immediately.

3. PROMOTING ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

NETNS will only reward acceptable behaviour.

REWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Teachers and other school staff use a range of strategies for promoting behaviour at class and school level.

Our school's emphasis is on affirming positive behaviour, and any sanctions applied are to support a change to acceptable behaviour.

See ~~Error! Reference source not found. Appendix B Strategies used to promote acceptable behaviour~~ for more details on strategies in use within the school to encourage and promote good behaviour.

BULLYING

In NETNS bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable.

- Teachers have a professional duty of care to address bullying and the school has an *Anti-Bullying Policy* which includes action to be taken in relation to alleged breaches of the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

4. SUSPENSION / EXPULSION PROCEDURES

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;

The school will follow guidelines as laid out in the *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

SUSPENSION

NETNS will invoke Suspension / Expulsion procedures when required

AUTHORITY

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

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried and reviewed before a suspension is considered. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- 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

A decision to suspend a student has been taken by the Principal in consultation with the Board of Management. (BOM meeting Jan 2012) The decision will follow an investigation into the alleged misbehaviour. The investigation should give an opportunity to the student involved and his/her parents or guardians to have their views heard. Where the immediate safety of others is believed to be compromised a suspension may take place immediately followed by an investigation into events.

A suspension may be considered following continued episodes of misconduct or in response to a single incident of serious misconduct

In cases of immediate suspension the parents /guardian will be contacted immediately and requested to make arrangements to collect the student. In all situations of suspension the parents /guardians will be notified in writing of the details of the suspension. The letter should outline;

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

- The reasons for the suspension
- The duration of the suspension should be time limited.
- Arrangements for return to school including any commitments to be entered into by the student on their return to school

All suspensions over 6 days should be notified to the NEWB. Where suspensions exceed 20 days the parents/guardian should be notified of their right to make an appeal to the DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

EXPULSION (PERMANENT EXCLUSION)

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

The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled are set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion)

NETNS will have made all efforts to resolve issues before considering the expulsion of a student. Where the Principal forms the view based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. Where consideration is being given to expelling a student, parents/guardians will be written to outlining the grounds on which the expulsion is being considered. The letter will also invite the parent/guardian to attend the Board of Management meeting where the case will be heard, furnish them with any relevant documentation and invite them to put their case before the Board either orally or by written submission or both. All relevant documents will also be furnished to the members of the Board.

At the hearing the Principal and parents/guardians will put their case before the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be given the opportunity to question the evidence of the other party directly. The parents/guardians may also put forward a case for a reduced sanction to be imposed. Both the Principal and parents/guardians should then withdraw from the meeting while the Board consider the case before them and makes their decision.

NETNS - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The decision of the Board is then communicated to the parents/guardians in writing. If the decision of the Board is to expel the student this decision is notified to the NEWB. The expulsion cannot take effect until the passing of 20 school days from the date of receipt of this notification by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). If the Board considers it necessary in order to maintain good order and the safety of students in the school it may decide to suspend the student for the 20 day period.

On receipt of the notification of intention to expel the student the EWO must make all reasonable efforts to consult with the Principal, parents/guardians and anyone else that may be of assistance. The EWO will also convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Section 24, Education Welfare, Act 2000). The purpose of these consultations is to make provision for the on-going education of the student. These discussions may also give rise to a proposal for an alternative intervention to avoid expulsion. Such a proposal should be brought back to the Board for their consideration.

Where no alternative to expulsion is found the Board should after the passing of 20 school days ratify its decision to expel the student. This decision should be communicated immediately in writing to the parents/guardians. This function can be delegated by the Board to the Chairman of the board and the Principal.

The parents/guardian should be notified of their right to appeal the expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

5. KEEPING RECORDS

A standardised record system will be used in the school to track an individual student's behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the student to deal with unacceptable behaviour will also be recorded, including contact with parents or referral to other agencies. Positive responses by a student, and evidence of changed behaviour, will be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed.

[Parents/ guardians](#) will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record.

Records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. The eight rules of data protection apply to personal records kept in school:

1. Obtain and process information fairly.
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes.
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes.
4. Keep it safe and secure.
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date.
6. Ensure it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes.
8. Give a copy of their personal data to an individual on request.

CLASS LEVEL

- Copies of incident forms / student's reflection on an incident will be copied and kept in the student's file.
- A student will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.
- The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.'
- Staff have a clear and consistent understanding of what constitutes acceptable behaviour and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and discuss these matters regularly at staff meetings.
- The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour.

- Problematic behaviour will have been discussed with parents / guardians before noting/recording on the end of year report.

PLAYGROUND

- Supervising teachers maintain written records of behaviour/incidents on standard behaviour/incident forms.

7. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- E. The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence 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 this absence.

- NETNS policy in relation to explanation of student absences is that parents/guardians send in a note informing teachers of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. Verbal notification is insufficient.
- Written notes are signed and dated.
- NETNS uses the standard forms to report on student absences to the National Education Welfare Board.²

See ~~Error! Reference source not found. Appendix F: REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCES & EXPULSIONS~~ for more details on reporting absence within Primary Schools.

² See forms on www.newb.ie

