

GAELSCOIL ULTAIN

Code of Behaviour

Tá leagan Gaeilge den Chód seo ar fáil ón scoil.

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. VISION**
- 3. AIMS**
- 4. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**
- 5. STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE GOOD BEHAVIOUR**
- 6. CLASSIFICATION OF MISBEHAVIOUR**
- 7. USE OF SANCTIONS**
- 8. INVOLVING PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN MANAGING PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR**
- 9. MANAGING AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR**
- 10. APPEALS**
- 11. SUSPENSION**
- 12. EXPULSION**



1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Behaviour was developed in February-May 2011 and September 2011 by the staff of Gaelscoil Ultain in accordance with the guidelines Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, published by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB, 2008), and in consultation with the members of the Board of Management, the pupils and the parents' committee. The Code of Behaviour conforms with legislation as required by Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000). The Code of Behaviour is available on the school website, in the reception area of the school and a copy of the code is given to new parents at the beginning of the school year in September.

The Code was sanctioned by the Board of Management in October 2011 and was implemented from 7th November 2011.

2. VISION

Gaelscoil Ultain seeks to provide each child in our care with the highest level of education possible in a safe and stimulating environment. In striving to achieve this aim we take care to recognise that each child is unique with different specialities, talents and needs.

The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, pupils and parents. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

3. AIMS

The code aims at creating a healthy, safe, friendly, caring and ordered environment based on respect and tolerance where each child can feel secure and confident. The code not only applies everywhere on the school premises but also applies at any school related activity, whether on or off the premises. This code describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. Every effort will be made by all members of the staff to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in the school.

4. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

In Gaelscoil Ultain school we expect **parents** to:

- be familiar with the Code of Behaviour, discuss it with their child and support its implementation
- treat all school staff and other parents and children with respect, courtesy and polite language.
- inform the school of any issue which may affect a child's progress or behaviour.
- co-operate with school staff in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- be interested in, support and encourage their children's work.
- ensure children are in uniform, are clean, have a healthy lunch and are punctual.
- send a written explanation if a child is absent from school.
- make an appointment through the secretary /teacher if they wish to meet teacher to discuss concerns or problems.
- follow all school routines and rules as outlined in the school booklet, policies, website and newsletters.

In Gaelscoil Ultain we expect **school staff** to:

- carry out their full duties to the best of their ability
- support and implement the Code of Behaviour
- be cognisant of their duty of care
- treat children, parents and other staff members with respect, courtesy and polite language.
- create a safe and happy working environment for each pupil
- be punctual at all times.
- co-operate with each other and work as part of a team.
- be fair and consistent.
- comply with all school policies.

Teachers are also expected to

- facilitate all pupils, through full implementation of the Revised Curriculum, to reach their full academic potential.
- liaise with parents on any health and safety, behaviour or educational issues involving their child.

The **principal** is also expected to

- assume responsibility for discipline throughout the school.
- ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

A set of classroom and general school rules will be outlined to pupils at the beginning of each school year. These rules will set out clear class and school routines for all pupils and will facilitate the effective management and organisation of the school. Those rules will be based on the expectations we have of pupils in Gaelscoil Ultain. In Gaelscoil Ultain we expect **PUPILS** to show respect to the school, to adults and to other pupils by:

Respect for the School

- using Irish at all times on the school campus, on school outings and during after-school activities
- respecting the property of the school
- keeping their classroom, the school premises and grounds tidy and free of litter
- wearing the school uniform in full every day. The school tracksuit is to be worn on P.E. day and the formal uniform or tracksuit can be worn on the remaining days. Pupils shall not wear long earrings or loose jewellery in school. Earrings and other jewellery are not part of the boys' uniform and are likewise forbidden. Pupils' hair is to be its natural colour in school.
- being punctual at all times

Respect for Adults

- being polite, mannerly and respectful to all members of the school community - pupils, staff, parents and visitors
- not engaging in behaviour, directly or indirectly, which may prevent, interrupt or interfere with teachers in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities
- completing all class work and homework as prescribed by the teacher and follow all instructions/directions given by members of staff



Respect for Fellow Pupils

- allowing all pupils to engage in school work or recreation without interruption or disturbance from another pupil.
- encouraging pupils to be truthful in their dealings with each other and with the school staff at all times.
- being mindful of their own safety and that of others and never doing anything which might endanger that safety.
- playing safe and letting everyone participate.
- not engaging in bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated aggression- verbal, psychological or physical- conducted by an individual or group against others. Our school community will not tolerate any unkind actions, name-calling or unkind remarks – even if these were not intended to hurt. Pupils should respect each other by reporting all instances of bullying.

Pupils are also expected to

- follow the classroom/school rules as set out by the teacher/principal at the beginning of the school year.
- move through the school campus at walking pace in an orderly fashion.
- eat lunch in classroom before exiting to the yard.
- play in the allocated yard. On wet mornings, pupils shall go to the shelter.
- remain on the premises until 3pm each day.
- not bring Tippex, crisps, chewing gum, glass bottles or cans to school.
- not bring presents, toys or money to school except when requested by the teachers to do so. Lunch is to be shared with others only in exceptional circumstances.
- where a pupil brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be kept out of sight, switched off and may not be used for any purpose on the school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities. The only exception to this is in an emergency or with the approval of a teacher.

5. STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE GOOD BEHAVIOUR

The school actively promotes positive behaviour by

- fostering good relationships between all partners in the school community
- having in place standards that set high expectations for student behaviour
- having good school and class routines
- involving students in the development of the code of behaviour and of the drawing up of class/school rules
- giving students responsibility in the school
- adults modelling good behaviour.
- recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- commenting on behaviour and attitudes as well as academic achievement in the school report.
- encouraging parents to nurture a positive attitude towards school.

Rewards

- Age appropriate reward systems will be used in all classes. Teachers will devise and administer their own in-class reward system, taking account of the various learning styles of individual students.
- Teachers will regularly praise good behaviour both in the classroom and in the playground.
- Pupils may be sent to another class or Principal's office to report good behaviour.
- Praise at Assembly.
- Positive comment in dialann/on pupil's work.
- Mention to parent.
- Delegation of some special responsibility or privilege.
- Certificate for full attendance.
- Organisation of extra curricular activities.
- End of year Activity Day.
- Display of achievements.

Care is needed to ensure that rewards do not

- become the goal of learning.
- result in unhelpful competition.
- repeatedly reward the same students.
- seem unattainable to some students.

6. CLASSIFICATION OF MISBEHAVIOUR

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories: Minor, Serious or Gross.

A general description/definition of each type of misbehaviour associated with the three categories is given below and a more detailed list of examples is in Appendix 1 of the code.

Staff will make judgements based on common sense/frequency of misbehaviour/ age-vulnerability of child.

Minor Misbehaviour

Unintentional or isolated breach of class or school rules

Serious Misbehaviour

Continual Minor Misbehaviour

Deliberate or repeated breach of class or school rules

Gross Misbehaviour

Continual Serious Misbehaviour

Physical act of violent behaviour to member of school community or property

7. USE OF SANCTIONS

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour.

Sanctions are to be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

A sanction should:

- defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way.
- be timely.

Inappropriate sanctions include

- physical punishment or threat of same.
- ridicule, sarcasm, remarks which undermine confidence.
- public or private humiliation.
- group punishment.
- leaving student in unsupervised situation.
- persistent isolation of, or ignoring of, pupil in class.
- consistently denying a student access to a particular part of the curriculum.



The staff of Gaelscoil Ultain may avail of the following sanctions. The staff member will determine the most appropriate sanction(s) to be used in cases of misbehaviour. The list of sanctions is not exhaustive and a staff member may take other prudent steps if necessary. The individual sanctions within the various stages are not in any particular order. The staff member may not necessarily avail of each sanction within the categories. The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the Code and may intervene at any time and take disciplinary action within the spirit of this Code.

Stage 1 Minor Misbehaviour

Reasoning with pupil

Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve

Time out

Stage 2 Serious Misbehaviour

Note in dialann to parent

Temporary separation from peers within class

Temporary removal to another class

Loss of privileges or special responsibility

Additional work/Detention

Teacher must invoke the following before proceeding to Stage 3

Talk to parents

Inform Principal via Billeog Eolais

Stage 3 Serious Misbehaviour

Child is referred to Principal via An Bhilleog Átreoraithe and the Principal may avail of the following:

Detention

Denial of participation in school activities

Formal letter to parent

Principal/Class teacher meet with parents

Principal/Chairperson of Board of Management meet with parents

Stage 4 Gross Misbehaviour

Immediate referral to Principal

Principal may take all necessary, reasonable and prudent steps to avoid reoccurrence of behaviour and ensure safety of school

Community including Suspension and Expulsion.

Misbehaviour in Yard

- 1) Teacher on duty reasons with pupil.
- 2) A child may accompany teacher while he/she patrols yard.
- 3) Time out from play.
- 4) Inform class teacher, via An Billeog Chlóis, who may decide to impose further sanction after bringing the code of conduct/overall behaviour into consideration.

Teachers may use 1 to 4 in order or proceed to a more advanced stage depending on the seriousness of misbehaviour.

Attendance/Punctuality

In the case of a child being absent on a regular basis, the teacher should refer the matter to the Deputy Principal.

In the case of a child regularly arriving late for school, the teacher should contact parents.

These issues are not to be discussed with the child.

Mobile Phones

Pupils who ignore the policy on mobile phones will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff. Parents will be contacted and asked to collect it from the school office a week later.

Speaking Irish

Pupils who ignore the policy on using Irish will be referred to the Deputy Principal.



Detention

- The child will be kept in at An Bínse during break or lunchtime and may be prescribed class work or behaviour worksheet.

Time Out

- The child may be sent to An Bínse during break or lunchtime for a maximum of half the period.
- The child may be separated from the rest of the class for a maximum of 10 minutes to continue with class work.

8. INVOLVING PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN MANAGING PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and, as such, will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour, both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's homework journal/copy which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. Parents of infants will receive a short note from the teacher. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour, the Principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians requesting them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management may also attend these meetings. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings, if deemed appropriate.

9. MANAGING AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. Regular communication, in the form of a written log, will be completed by the class teacher, in order to provide continuous feedback between parents and teachers on the child's behaviour. This will be in addition to regular verbal communication.

10. APPEALS

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

(See Circular 22/02)

11. SUSPENSION

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For Gross Misbehaviour, or for continual Serious Misbehaviour, suspension for a period will be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal and the teacher, if applicable. If the parents and pupil do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, suspension for a period will be considered.

Prior to suspension, the Principal, where possible, may review the case in consultation with teacher and other members of the school community involved, having due regard to record (if any) of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used, and their outcome, and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rule for National School and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of Gross Misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils and staff, the Board of Management has authorised the Principal to sanction immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal will outline to the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements 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.

When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

REMOVAL OF SUSPENSION (REINSTATEMENT)

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parents/guardians 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 to that of the other pupils or to staff.

12. EXPULSION

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case (see p.80/81/82, Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) e.g. where repeated incidents of serious or gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).



Appendix 1: Examples of Misbehaviour

Appendix 2; Billeog Chlóis

Appendix 3: Billeog Eolais-Átreoraithe

Appendix 4: Leathanach Oibre