

GAIRMSCOIL MHUIRE

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

**ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
19/05/2009**

**APPROVED BY CO. GALWAY VEC
16/09/2009**

**THIS POLICY HAS BEEN PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES PRODUCED BY
THE NATIONAL EDUCATION WELFARE BOARD AS PER THE EDUCATION WELFARE ACT 2000
SECTION 23**

**THIS POLICY HAS BEEN PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS, STUDENTS, STAFF,
THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND COUNTY GALWAY VEC**

LINK TO MISSION STATEMENT

Good behaviour is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place in school. This Code provides a just and reasonable system to ensure responsible behaviour by students, staff and parents/guardians. Affirmation and reward of good behaviour by school and home is a fundamental part of this Code of Behaviour.

The Code of Behaviour and the expectations set out therein are based on respect for others, a commitment to study and participation in the life of the school.

ROLE OF EACH MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

STUDENTS

Each student must give a commitment to accept the code of behaviour and to fulfil the expectations as set out in the code. This will ensure the creation and maintenance of a good learning environment.

PARENTS

Parents/Guardians have a duty to support the school in implementing a fair and just code of behaviour. Acceptance of the Code of Behaviour by parents/guardians is required on enrolment of a student in the school.

TEACHER

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and share, with other teachers, students and parents a common responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds.

CLASS TUTOR/CAOMHNÓIR

The Class Tutor monitors the wellbeing of each student. He/she may intervene on disciplinary matters when requested to do so by subject teachers. The Class Tutor may also meet parents/guardians.

YEAR HEAD/TUTOR/CEANNAIRE

The Year Tutor co-ordinates and administers the Class Tutor system and acts in consultation with teachers and Class Tutors in the area of discipline. The Year Tutor meets parents/guardians. The year head is responsible for monitoring punctuality, absences, uniform and liaising with academic monitors.

PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral care team act to support students in the school who may be experiencing difficulties.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

The Deputy Principal has responsibility for co-ordinating discipline in the school. He/she will ensure, with the co-operation of all staff, that good order prevails in the school. He/she will be consulted by the Year Heads and Class Tutors regarding such matters. In the absence of the Principal he/she acts for the Principal.

PRINCIPAL

The Principal has final responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. He/she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management gives formal approval to the Code of Behaviour and supports the Principal and teaching staff in the just implementation of the Code. The Board of Management hears appeals by parents/guardians against the decision of the Principal to suspend and or expel student.

EXPECTATIONS

In defining the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances in this school. The aim is to provide a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour by all concerned staff, parents and students alike, and to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to accommodate the individuality of each student while acknowledging the right of each student to education in a disruption-free environment. The Code extends to the environs of the school, to school outings and trips and while travelling to and from school.

1. Students should attend school everyday and arrive on time for each class

This means:

- That you attend everyday unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- That if you miss school you bring a note to your Year Head
- That absences be explained by note from parents to Year Head
- That if you are late you must sign in at the office and have a note of explanation
- That if you must leave school during the day, you bring in a note and get permission from the Deputy Principal or Principal and sign a special register book.
- That you arrive at all classes on time and not delay on way.

Because

- Progress at school requires optimum attendance and punctuality.
- The Education Welfare Act 2000 legally requires parents to inform the school regarding all absences
- The school is responsible for you during school time.
- Good attendance and good timekeeping helps a full class do well

2. Students should do your best to work both in class and at your homework.

This means:

- That you listen to your teachers and concentrate on learning and be attentive
- That you allow teachers to teach and fellow students to learn
- That you do not disturb the class
- That you do your homework each night written and oral, it must be completed on time, in full, to the highest possible standard, and be ready for inspection
- That you always carry your journal and take down homework in it
- That you come properly prepared for your subjects, i.e. that you have all your copies, pens and any other specialist equipment required.

Because

- The teacher has a right to teach and all students have a right to learn in an environment free from disruption
- Homework is an essential part of the learning process

3. Students must come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy

This means

- That you wear the prescribed school shirt, school jumper, grey trousers or skirt and black leather shoes
- If missing any item of school uniform, report to the Deputy Principal
- You only wear the prescribed jacket or the school team sports jacket
- Full uniform must be worn with pride from the time you leave your home until you return, and during out of school activities

Because

- This is the uniform agreed to by parents, students and the school authorities
- We all have a responsibility to maintain the image of school.

4. Students must have respect and consideration for other students

This means

- ***Every individual has the right to be treated with respect, tolerance, understanding and in a just manner***
- Being fair to everyone
- Helping other students if they need help
- Not picking on or bullying others
- Not fighting in or out of school
- You respect the property of students and teachers
- Respect school property

Because

- Mutual respect is important
- Bullying can cause fear and hurt. We want our school to be a safe place.
- Defacing/damaging school property is destructive and shows a lack of respect for the school community of which the student is a member.

5. Students must show courtesy, consideration and good manners in your dealings while travelling to and from school, in school or on school trips.

This means

- All students show politeness, respect and courteous co-operation to all school staff, fellow students, visitors to the school, bus drivers and members of the community at all times
- Visitors to the school are to be welcomed and directed to the Secretary's office.
- Ill mannered, disruptive or dangerous behaviour is not tolerated.
- Knock before entering a class or offices

Because

- We should treat others as we like to be treated ourselves

6. That you respect the school environment

This means

- Keeping school clean and free of litter
- Litter must be placed in bins

- No chewing gum
- Not returning to the school grounds after school hours/weekends/holidays without permission from the school principal or deputy principal.
- You do not damage school property

Because

- Everybody benefits from working and learning in a pleasant environment

7. Students should not possess or smoke cigarettes in school

The school Substance Abuse Policy forbids possession or use of cigarettes on school premises or while engaging in school activities. Because of its serious nature, any student found smoking/in possession of cigarettes, will face a fine of €10 for the first offence, €20 for the second, €30 for the third and €30 and suspension for the fourth and subsequent offences.

- 8. Students should not use mobile phones during class time.** Where students must bring mobile phones to school, they should be left in the student's locker. Where teachers form the opinion that the student's mobile phone causes a disruption of any sort, it will be confiscated. It must be given to the teacher on request and it will be left in the school office for a period of one week to be collected by the student's parent/guardian at a time convenient to school management.

- 9. Addictive Substances e.g. alcohol and unprescribed drugs are strictly banned in Gairmscoil Mhuire.** The school will be obliged to inform parents/guardians and the relevant authorities.

- 10. The School Student Journal** is an essential part of communication between teachers and parents. All students are issued with a journal by the school and are required to have it in class at all times. Failure to produce the journal when required to do so by a teacher is a breach of the code of behaviour. Students who deface their school journal will be required to replace it and may be subject to the appropriate sanctions.

SANCTIONS/DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

It is hoped that a student and his parents/guardians will respond positively to any sanctions imposed and that the student will reflect on their unacceptable behaviour, accept responsibility and change their future behaviour to meet the expectations of the school. Breaches of the code will be based on the referral system.

Sanctions for misbehaviour are usually progressive. **In serious incidents of misbehaviour normal disciplinary procedures will be abridged and the issue referred to the Year Head, Behaviour Improvement Ceannaire, Deputy Principal or Principal.**

SUBJECT TEACHER IN CLASS

1. The teacher has primary responsibility for discipline within his/her own classroom.
2. In general the teacher will handle all the day-to-day problems that arise in the classroom.
3. All teachers have a role both inside and outside the classroom in relation to discipline.
4. Each teacher applies the code of discipline in a fair and just manner.

5. Punishment to be effective must be known and understood by all the class.
6. When the subject teacher is faced with a persistent offender, then the matter is referred to the class tutor. The class tutor will explore with the student the reasons for their misbehavior and if there is no improvement in the student's behaviour, the class tutor will refer the matter to the Year Head.
7. The subject teacher should record all instances of misdemeanor and positive comments on E-Portal. For all serious incidents of misbehavior an incident report sheet (IRS) should be completed by the subject teacher and given to the year head. IRS's should only be completed for serious or persistent breaches of the code of behaviour. Reference should also be made on E-Portal in relation to all IRS's by subject teachers.

YEAR HEAD

8. The Year Head may proceed as follows:
 - a. Full details are taken by the Year head of the incident or repeated misbehaviour.
 - b. Arrangements are made if necessary, to contact or interview the Parents / Guardians.
 - c. She/he may decide to deal with the matter (e.g place on report), or may bring the matter before the Behaviour Improvement Ceannaire or Behaviour Improvement Committee depending on the seriousness of the incident.
 - d. The Year Head should record all instances of misbehavior and positive comments on E-Portal
 - e. For serious disciplinary matters the Parent / Guardian may be contacted straight away and asked to come to the school to discuss the matter with the year head and may be asked to remove the student from the school for the remainder of the day. A student should not be sent home during school hours, except in the care of his Parent / Guardian.
 - f. If the Year Head deems the matter to be sufficiently serious or has potential for further problems, then he/she has the option of requesting a meeting of the Behaviour Improvement Committee.

BEHAVIOUR IMPROVEMENT CEANNAIRE (BIC)

9. The BIC will work with students under his/her care to encourage them to improve their behaviour.
10. The student will be monitored on a continuous basis and the parents kept informed.
11. If the behaviour does not improve the student may be referred to the behaviour improvement committee

BEHAVIOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

12. Before the behaviour improvement committee meets, the Parent / Guardian must be informed and given the opportunity to come to the school and discuss the matter with the year head if they so wish. The Parent / Guardian do not attend the behaviour improvement committee hearing.
13. The behaviour improvement committee consists of: The Year Head of the student, the BIC and a teacher in the school.
14. The student is given a full hearing and will be questioned about the case by the members. After the student withdraws, the committee will discuss the case and make recommendations to the Principal. Both the incident and the decision of the Committee are recorded on E-portal and placed on the students file

SCHOOL DETENTION

The deputy principal and principal may use lunch time or after school detention as the first sanction for serious breaches of the schools code of behaviour. Should a student fail to attend two lunch time detentions or be placed on and attend three lunchtime detentions they will be placed on after school detention. In such instances parents will receive 48 hours notification and detention will last from 4.15pm to 5.00pm. In certain instances Saturday or holiday detention may also be given with prior approval of the Parent / Guardian. The Deputy Principal and Principal should record all instances of misdemeanor and positive comments on E-Portal

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, the school may have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour. However as mentioned previously some of the steps will be abridged for very serious incidents of misbehavior. Internal suspension within the school may also be used as a means of sanction for persistent breaches of the code of behaviour.

Serious or persistent breaches of the schools code of behaviour that will result in suspension and/or expulsion include:

- serious or persistent disruption of teaching and learning,
- the use of obscene, offensive or abusive language in word or writing in the school or towards any person
- Theft of, vandalism or damage to school property or the personal property of others
- Persistent bullying of another student or staff member
- Unauthorised use of fire doors, alarms or health and safety equipment
- Persistent failure to wear the school uniform
- Failure to have report card signed by each teacher
- Interference with the personal lives of teachers at home or outside of school

The school authorities deem the incidents below as very serious breaches of the code of behaviour and will warrant all steps to be abridged, these include:

- Selling alcohol, drugs or related substances(unprescribed medication or legal drug substitutes for illegal drugs)
- In possession of alcohol, drugs or related substances for supply
- Use or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or related substance(unprescribed medication or legal drug substitutes for illegal drugs)
- Acts of physical violence towards students or staff members
- Acts of sexual harassment towards students or staff members
- Any act which endangers the health and safety and welfare of themselves or others in the school

It is not possible to list all serious offences and the above list is used as a guide for the school management as an indication of the seriousness of the offences that may warrant suspension / expulsion.

In all cases of suspension this is a decision of the principal having heard all sides and considered the case. Parents will be notified in advance of the suspension. A report on all suspensions imposed will be made to the board of management.

A sub-committee of the board may also meet to discuss with a student and their parent / guardian the student's behaviour in the school. This meeting is to facilitate where possible an agreed level of behaviour. This responsibility has been delegated to the Chairperson and two other members. Where possible the education welfare officer will also be invited to such a meeting. Where a student has been suspended for an incident of serious misbehaviour he/she may be asked to sign a contract of acceptable behaviour upon their return to school.

The board of management has devolved responsibility to the principal to suspend a student for up to three days or up to five days for serious breaches of the code of behaviour. A sub-committee of the board can suspend for a further length of time should the need arise if a full board meeting cannot be called. This responsibility has been delegated to the Chairperson and two other members.

The Board of Management decides on a recommendation from the Principal to expel a student following a hearing at which the Principal gives the reasons for his recommendation and the parents/guardians of the student may give reasons why the recommendation should not be approved.

In all cases of expulsion the principal's recommendation to expel a student is subject to the decision of the board of management.

In all cases involving suspension by the Principal, the parents/guardians have the right of appeal to the Board of Management within 42 days of receiving notification.

In all cases involving cumulative suspensions of twenty days, the parents/guardians have the right of appeal to the Board of Management within 42 days of receiving notification, thereafter to County Galway VEC and thereafter to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act (1998). In all cases involving expulsion, the parents/guardians have the right of appeal to County Galway VEC and thereafter to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act (1998).

The **National Education Welfare Board** are notified where the cumulative number of days for suspension reaches six or when a student is expelled from school or refused enrolment or where there are education welfare concerns. The contact details of the local office are **Unit 19, Sandyfort Business Centre, Grealishtown, Bohermore Galway Tel: 091 385 302 Fax: 091 760 915.**

PROMOTING AND REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOUR

The school places a significant emphasis on promoting and rewarding good behaviour. This is done in a number of ways; through affirmation and acknowledgment by the teacher in class and in the student journal, at parent/teacher meetings, at assemblies, in newsletters and local publications and end of year award ceremonies. **We set high expectations for all our students and endeavour to create a positive learning environment.** Promoting positive behaviour is expanded upon further in our Promoting Positive Behaviour Guidelines for Students, Teachers and Parents which detail the expectations for students further and outline those for teachers and parents (they are currently under development)

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

The implementation, monitoring and review of this policy will be done by senior management in conjunction with the staff, parents and the board of management on an ongoing basis. It is envisaged that the policy would be reviewed on a formal basis two years after the date of adoption by the board of management.

Date adopted by the Board of Management 19/05/2009

Appendix 1

Use of Incident Report Sheets.

Incident Report sheets are only be written for serious or persistent breaches of the schools code of behaviour. These include

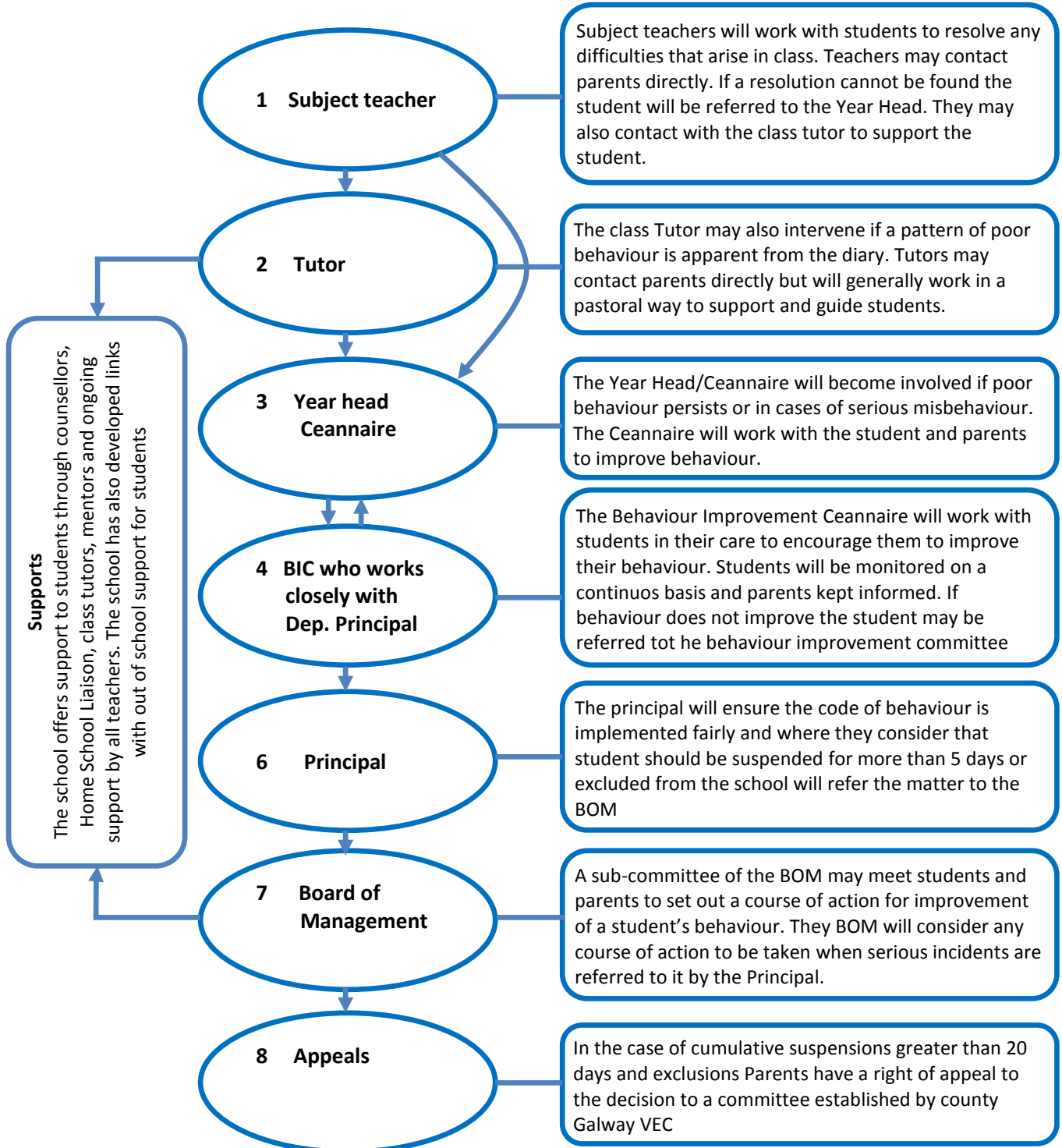
- serious or persistent disruption of teaching and learning,
 - Persistently not handing up homework
 - Continually late for class
 - Persistent disruption of lessons e.g. talking, interruption etc.
- the use of obscene, offensive or abusive language in word or writing in the school or towards any person
- Theft of, vandalism or damage to school property or the personal property of others
- Persistent bullying of another student or staff member
- Unauthorised use of fire doors, alarms or health and safety equipment
- Persistent failure to wear the school uniform

These are outlined in the schools code of behaviour and may also warrant suspension or expulsion.

All other incidents of misbehaviour are recorded on e-portal.

Appendix 2

Gairmscoil Mhuire Consequences of Poor Behaviour



One or more steps may be abridged depending on the seriousness of the students' behaviour