

# **SCOIL AN ATHAR TADHG**

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE**

This policy was drafted by the Staff of Scoil an Athar Tadhg in 2010 and replaces the Code of Discipline that had previously been applied. It was presented to the Parents Association and the Board of Management for input and was amended to reflect the views of those agencies.

This policy was reviewed and updated by teaching staff in September, 2016.

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for pupils, teachers and parents and other interested parties on behavioural expectations as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23(1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school and the EPSEN Act, 2004.

### **1.2 MISSION STATEMENT**

*We envisage our School to be a safe, friendly, caring community, tolerant of difference and respectful of individuals, where we can all grow and learn in a positive, nurturing environment.*

*The School seeks to provide a climate in which pupils are encouraged to develop spiritual and moral values, personal and social skills and physical, intellectual and aesthetic abilities. We aspire towards the highest standards of excellence of which each child is capable.*

*We aim to achieve this in a calm, respectful, well ordered happy environment. We endeavour to provide the children with life skills to enable them to become proud, fulfilled citizens of the world.*

### **1.3 AIMS**

In devising the code consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

Our aims are:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement and that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development and in which teachers can teach without disruption.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive and consistent approach to the question of behaviour in school.

### **2.1 WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between staff members and the ways in which pupils and staff treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school. In Scoil an Athar Tadhg there is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that our primary focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of good behaviour. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to be tolerant of these differences

## **2.2 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.
- Organise and implement an inclusive review structure

## **2.3 PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal
- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

## **2.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS & ANCILLARY STAFF**

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when an issue arises (repeated minor misdemeanours/serious misdemeanours) and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

## **2.5 PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.
- Interact positively with others summed up as “Kind thoughts, Kind words, Kind actions”

## **2.6 PARENTS / GUARDIANS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation.
- To sign the form accepting the Code of Behaviour on enrolment of their child.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Monitor children's use of the internet and social media and cooperate with the school in promoting online safety and preventing cyber bullying.

### 3.1 SCHOOL RULES

**Safety:** For my own safety and that of others:

1. I will use correct entrance and exit gates to come in and leave school.
2. I will always walk in the school building.
3. I will remain seated in class and while eating lunch.
4. I will play safely in the school yard.
5. I will not leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal.

**Caring for Myself:**

6. I will respect myself and my property and will keep my school bag, books and copies tidy.
7. I will be on time for school and will leave school promptly at home time.
8. I will show respect for my school and will wear my full uniform except when I am told to wear school track suit.
9. I will bring a healthy lunch to school.
10. I will do my best in school by listening carefully, working well and doing my homework.

**Caring for Others:**

11. I will be kind and respectful to teachers, staff and pupils by being polite, taking turns and behaving well at all times.
12. I will behave well in class so that we can all learn and my teacher can teach.
13. I will keep my school clean by bringing home food leftovers, drinks cartons and wrappers.
14. I will respect the property of other pupils, the school buildings and grounds.
15. I will be truthful and honest.

**Bullying:**

16. I will not bully other children. I will not join in with someone who is bullying. I should not be bullied by others and if this happens to me I will tell my parents and my teacher. If I am aware that someone else is being bullied I will inform my parents and teacher.

## 4.1 AFFIRMING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on incentives than on sanctions. The most effective methodology in managing challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place.

**PRAISE** will be given by:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group, a class or the whole school.
- Individual, group or whole class reward systems.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with Parent/Guardian e.g. Happygrams
- Star/Student of the Week Presentations

## 4.2 STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

When pupils fail to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined sanctions will be imposed. The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health and safety.

In Scoil an Athar Tadhg misbehaviour is classified into three categories by degree of seriousness. These are Minor, Serious and Gross Misdemeanours. 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 and frequency of such misdemeanours.

#### **4.3 MINOR MISDEMEANOURS**

Examples: Interrupting classwork, running in school building, misbehaving in class line, placing uneaten food/drinks cartons in bins, being discourteous/unmannerly, leaving litter around school, not completing homework without good reason, not wearing correct uniform/tracksuit, not having homework signed if so required, leaving seat when instructed otherwise, being outside the yard boundaries or being on the grass without permission, bringing glass bottles, cans or chewing gum to school, endangering self or fellow pupils at break time, using a mobile phone during school hours without permission. (See Mobile Phone Policy)

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Minor Misdemeanours

- Non verbal cues/signals
- A quiet word or Verbal reprimand
- Reasoning with pupil

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours

*Phase 1: At Class Teacher Level:*

- Noting instances of yard misbehaviour in yard book
- Temporary separation from peers (Time Out) within class or in the yard; and/or temporary removal to another class
- Write out any or all of the following: a story of what happened/ one copy of relevant school rule /the reason for the existence of the rule that is broken.  
Teacher may request this be signed by both Parents/Guardians
- Denial of participation in part of some class activity
- Detention during a break \*
- Note or phone call to Parents/Guardians concerning further misbehaviour in yard (misbehaviour in yard: action that puts the safety of self/other pupils at risk)

*Phase 2:*

- Send to the Principal
- Class Teacher meets one/both Parents/Guardians
- Principal and Class Teacher meet one/both Parents/Guardians

**\* *Procedure for Detention***

In circumstances where detention of a pupil is deemed appropriate by the school the following procedures will apply.

- The relevant teacher will inform the Principal or acting Principal that detention is to take place.
- Supervision will be arranged for the pupil in question in the Halla.
- The reason for detention will be explained to the pupil.
- A note informing the Parent/Guardian of the pupil of the detention and the reason for same will be sent home on the day of the detention.
- An appropriate assignment will be set for the pupil to complete for the duration of the detention.

**4.4 DEALING WITH SERIOUS MISDEMEANOURS:**

Examples: Endangering self/fellow pupils in school or deliberately injuring a fellow pupil, truancy – not coming to school when sent by parents/guardians, ganging up on, picking on or interfering with another pupil in school or on the way to/from school, loitering or playing games on school grounds after school hours, leaving school premises during school day without the appropriate permission, using unacceptable language, telling lies, back-answering a teacher or other staff member, stealing, damaging another person's property, graffiti on any school property, being constantly disruptive in class.

Examples of steps to be taken for dealing with Serious Misdemeanours

- Incident will be recorded in Class Behaviour Record and copies sent to Principal and/or Deputy Principal.

- Principal meets one/both Parents/Guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management informed and Parents/Guardians requested to meet Chairperson and Principal.

**Repeated Serious Misdemeanours:**

The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the Parents/Guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and Principal. If the Parents/Guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools.

**4.5 DEALING WITH GROSS MISDEMEANOURS:**

Examples: Verbal, physical or emotional bullying where the perpetrator is not cooperating with efforts to reform the undesirable behaviour, setting fire to school property, deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on, introducing alcohol/cigarettes or other drugs to school, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or child.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Gross Misdemeanours

- Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with Parents/Guardian
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6). “No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality”.

*Note: These lists consist of examples only – it is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.*

## **4.6 ROLE OF PARENTS IN MANAGEMENT OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR**

Parents/Guardians will be informed at an the earliest possible stage if problems occur and not simply at the point where possible suspensions are involved. Parents are invited to keep in close contact with the school in regard to all aspects of their child's progress.

## **4.7 MANAGING AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT MISBEHAVIOUR**

Children who are emotionally disturbed are referred for psychological assessment with the consent of parents/guardians. Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. HSE, NEPS.

### **5.1 SUSPENSION**

The Board of Management of a recognized school has the authority to suspend a pupil. A decision to suspend a pupil will only be considered when the following interventions have been tried and deemed by the school to have been unsuccessful.

**Stage 1:** Teacher discusses the serious or gross misbehaviour with pupil and outlines the consequences of a continuance of the misbehaviour. Sanctions are applied and parents and Principal are informed.

**Stage 2:** Pupil is sent to Principal and parents are again informed. A pupil sent to the Principal 3 times in one year under stage 2, will automatically move to stage 3 of this process.

**Stage 3:** The school convenes a meeting with parents. Pupil issued with a 1 week behaviour report card. At the end of the week, behaviour is reviewed. A pupil will only be put on report 3 times in a school year. If this intervention is unsuccessful, a pupil moves to stage 4.

**Stage 4:** Suspension is considered.

Factors which will influence a decision to suspend include:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions made to date.
- The appropriateness of suspension in the particular instance.
- The possible impact of the suspension.

A decision to suspend will be only be taken on serious grounds such as:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils e.g. shouting at teacher, being disruptive
- A refusal to work, not allowing others to work, taking up teacher's teaching time due to inappropriate behaviour
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to the safety of pupils/staff e.g. physical fights in school yard, leaving school premises without permission, serious consistent incidences of bullying or racism, use of bad language towards any member of school community.

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

## **5.2 Procedures To Be Followed in Respect of Suspension**

- School's behaviour committee will convene a meeting. The committee will include the Principal, Deputy Principal and class teacher. Fair procedures, based on the principles of natural justice, will be followed. These procedures apply to:
  - The investigation of alleged behaviour that may lead to suspension.
  - The process of decision making as to whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and what sanctions to impose.
- Once the preliminary investigation confirms that the behaviour warrants suspension, parents and pupils will be informed about the complaint. This will be done initially by phone, followed by a letter.
- A meeting will be organised as quickly as possible to allow parents an opportunity to respond.

### **5.3 Period of Suspension**

Parents can appeal both the Principal's and B.O.M.'s decision to suspend a pupil. Should the pupil be suspended for a total of 20 days or more in the school year, parents may appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act and will be facilitated in doing so, if required.

### **5.4 Implementing the Suspension**

The Principal will notify the parents of the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- The period of the suspension
- The reasons for the suspension
- The study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school e.g. commitment to adhering to Code of Behaviour, behaviour contract or pupil report card for a one week period.
- Provision for appeal

### **5.5 Reintegration of Pupil**

The school will make every effort to help a student to catch up with work missed. An opportunity to discuss feelings will be facilitated by the school. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support to make a fresh start.

### **5.6 Records and Reports**

Formal written reports of Behaviour Committee's meetings are kept in respect of:

- The investigation.
- The decision and rationale for same.
- Duration and any conditions attached to suspension.

All suspensions are reported to the Board of Management and to the National Education Welfare Board. A copy of the report will be given to parent/guardian on request.

## **6.1 EXPULSION**

A decision to permanently exclude a pupil from Scoil an Athar Tadhg will be made solely by the Board of Management. Expulsion is a very serious step, only taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour and only after the school has taken significant steps to address the behaviour. These steps include the following:

- Meeting with parents and pupil to explore ways of helping the pupil to change his/her behaviour.
- Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour (if it should persist).
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been explored.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive (HSE), Community Services, National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS).
- The grounds for expulsion and the factors which need to be considered are similar to those for suspension. However, where expulsion is concerned the school will already have tried a series of other interventions including suspension, before contemplating this course of action.

## **6.2 Expulsion for a First Offence**

The following kinds of behaviour may warrant such expulsion.

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or staff member.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying of alcohol/ drugs.

## **6.3 Procedures To Be Followed in Respect of Expulsion**

**STEP 1:** A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. Pupil and parents will be informed in writing regarding the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and informed that the outcome of the investigation could ultimately result in expulsion. Parents and pupil will then be invited to a meeting with the Principal and given every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made.

**STEP 2: A Recommendation to the B.O.M. by the Principal to Consider Expulsion.**

The Principal will inform parents and pupil that the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion. They will be given ample notification of the date of the hearing and invited to attend. Parents will also be advised that they can make a written or oral submission to the B.O.M.

**STEP 3: Consideration by the B.O.M. of Recommendation and the Holding of a Hearing.**

The B.O.M. will be provided with the same records of the investigation as the parents. The B.O.M. will review the initial investigation and must satisfy itself that fair procedures were upheld. It reviews all documentation. If the B.O.M. decides that an expulsion is warranted, it will hold a hearing. At the hearing, the Principal and parents will be invited to address the board. After both sides have been heard the B.O.M. will be left alone to make its decision. Parents and Principal will be asked to leave at this time.

**STEP 4: B.O.M. Deliberations and Actions Following the Hearing.**

Having heard from all the parties it is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if so whether or not expulsion is the appropriate action. The Board informs the parents of its conclusions and of the next steps in the process e.g. notification of decision to the Educational Welfare Officer. If the B.O.M. deems it necessary to expel the pupil the NEWB will be informed in writing via a *Notice to Expel* Form. The intention to expel a pupil does not take effect until 20 days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notice. This allows the Educational Welfare Officer time to intervene before the decision takes effect.

**STEP 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer during 20 day period.**

- Individual consultations will be scheduled with all parties, where feasible.
- Arrangements will be made for joint meeting of all concerned.

The purpose of the consultation and meetings is to ensure that arrangements are in place for the pupil to continue in education. The B.O.M. may suspend the pupil during this

process if there are concerns that the continued presence of the pupil will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils and staff.

### **STEP 6: Confirmation of the Decision to Expel**

Parents will be notified immediately by the B.O.M. and informed of their right to appeal the decision to expel. The standard appeal form will be given to parents. A formal record of the decision to expel will be made.

### **6.4 Appeals**

Parents may appeal the decision to expel to the Secretary General of the DES. The appeals process under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the appointment of a mediator. An appeal may also be brought by NEPS on behalf of the pupil.

## **7. ATTENDANCE**

### **7.1 Procedures regarding the notification of a child's absence from school.**

Under the Education and Welfare Act, 2000, schools are required to monitor school attendance and report on pupil attendance in certain circumstances. The school reports four times a year to the National Education and Welfare Board, which was established to support school attendance and to follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

### **7.2 The Role of Parents**

Parents are required to provide a written note of explanation to the relevant class teacher for all absences, either at the beginning or end of the period of absence. Any available medical certificates in respect of an absence due to illness, should also be passed on to the school.

### **7.3 Parents will be contacted by the school if:**

- A pupil is at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- A pupil has missed 20 school days.
- Parents fail to explain a pupil's absence.
- A pupil is regularly late for school.
- A pupils name is to be passed on to National Education Welfare Board.

Attendance records of children who transfer to Scoil an Athar Tadhg will be sought from previous school.

Attendance records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school as soon as notification of transfer has been received.

Attendance records of pupils transferring to Second Level schools will be sent to the school as soon as enrolment has been confirmed.

*Note: See also Scoil an Athar Tadhg Policy on School Attendance*

### **8. When and Where Does Our Code of Behaviour Apply?**

Our code applies to all behaviour during the school day, throughout the entire school campus and to all school related activities, regardless of location, as well as on the school bus.

### **9. Communication**

This revised Code of Behaviour was reviewed and amended by Parents Association in May 2010.

Upon application for Enrolment, each parent/guardian shall be provided with a copy of our school's Code of Behaviour.

***N.B. In accepting a place in the school, parents/guardians also accept our Code of Behaviour as a condition of enrolment.***

## **10. Implementation**

This policy has been implemented fully throughout the school since September 2010.

## **11. Review**

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed, as per NEWB guidelines, on an annual basis.

It was reviewed by teaching staff in Sept 2016.

## **10. Ratification**

This revised version of our code of behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on **March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017**.

**Ratified by Board of Management on      *June 28th, 2010***

**Michael O'Driscoll**

Chairperson, Board of Management

This updated (Sept 2016) version of our code of behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on **March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017**.

**Fr. Michael Regan**

Chairperson BOM

**A. LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Scoil an Athar Tadhg  
Carraig na bhFear  
Co. Cork

Dear Parents/Guardians,

A copy of the Scoil an athar Tadhg Code of Behaviour is being sent to each family. We would like you to read it and discuss it with your child/children. Then complete Section B below, stating that you have received a copy of the Code of Behaviour, and return it to the Class Teacher, please.

We thank you for your co-operation in helping us to make our school a safer and happier place for all.

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**Please return this section to the school**

**B. FORM FOR SIGNATURE**

I have received a copy of the Scoil an Athar Tadhg Code of Behaviour.

I have read the Code of Behaviour carefully. I will encourage my child/children named:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

to observe and obey this code at all times.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ (**Parent/Guardian**)

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_