



**Killygordon National School**  
**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

**Introduction**

The school plays a role in the children's social and moral development alongside their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour the school recognises that understanding of the adherence of rules varies with age. Therefore, there will be on-going teaching and modelling throughout a pupil's lifetime in the school.

We recognise that children bring to school a wide variety of behaviours. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and to develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore, any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff. Children will benefit from reminders about appropriate behaviour in various situations. We encourage parents to have regular conversations with their children about positive behaviour with others (including children and adults) at school, bus, clubs etc.

Our Code of Behaviour acknowledges the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

**Understanding behaviour**

*Taken from Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools; National Educational Welfare Board 2008, p.27.*

- Behaviour has meaning. It is not random. It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise.
- Behaviour can be learned. This means it can change.
- Behaviour takes place within a particular context and in relation to other people. Understanding the context is central to understanding the behaviour.
- What teachers, other adults and other students do in response to a student's behaviour is critical in influencing the choices students make about how they behave.
- Effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour.
- Positive acknowledgement is a very effective way of influencing and promoting good behaviour.



- The quality of relationships affects behaviour.

#### **Aims of the Code**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- To foster a sense of personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood

#### **Responsibility of Adults**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

*Acceptable behaviour of adults is referenced in our school's Grievance Policy.*

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- Discourage physical aggression and encourage kindness.



**Setting standards of behaviour**

**School Rules**

In order to achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the following rules:

**1. Respect**

Pupils are expected to have respect for themselves and others. This includes allowing other children to learn without disruption, and listening to and following staff instructions promptly. Pupils must show respect for their own property and the property of other children and of the school. Inappropriate behaviour i.e. rough play, bad language, fighting, aggressive or unwanted physical contact, name calling etc. will not be tolerated.

**2. Pupils' Work**

Class work is expected to be completed to the best of the pupil's ability – this includes oral work, group work, written work, reading etc. across all curricular areas. Pupils are expected to work harmoniously with other pupils and not hinder another child's learning in any way. Homework is assigned daily, and is expected to be completed to an equally high standard each night. It is recommended that parents check homework nightly and sign their child's homework diary and reading record. Incomplete homework must be explained in writing by a parent/guardian.

**3. School Uniform**

Pupils are expected to wear full school uniform daily, with the exception of the P.E. uniform which is worn on Wednesdays. Inappropriate footwear or jewellery is not permitted. Hairstyles should be neat and not impede schoolwork. Fake nails and makeup are not permitted for pupils in our school.

Parents should make regular checks of their child's hair for headlice, and report to the school and follow advice if headlice are detected.

**4. Movement in and around the school grounds**

Pupils should ask permission to leave their seat in classrooms. When engaging in movement lessons, pupils are expected to push in their chairs and move carefully and orderly around the classroom or to their assigned place. Pupils are allocated a place in lines for exiting and entering the classrooms and are



expected to use stairways safely i.e. walking in lines and holding on to handrails provided. Running is strictly forbidden within the school building.

### **5. Mobile Phones**

As part of the school's Acceptable Use Policy, mobile phones or other electronic devices are not permitted at school.

### **6. Attendance**

Pupils are expected to be dropped to school at 9:05am, and collected promptly at 2:45pm (1:45pm for Junior & Senior Infant pupils). Parental co-operation with adhering strictly to these times ensures that pupils are aware of boundaries and also minimises disruption linked to misbehaviour. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child attends school, and are asked to inform the school in writing of the date and reason for any absences.

### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the teachers will draft a list of class rules with the children – this can be done as a whole-school activity in Assembly, or as a class activity. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Rules will be presented in a positive manner. An explanation of the school rules may include the words “*do not...*”.

### **Explicit teaching**

In our school, we firmly believe in the explicit teaching of behavioural norms and rules. Children need explanations about the importance of rules, and how our rules apply within the classroom, school and sometimes home, clubs, bus and other places they visit. This explicit teaching is carried out from Junior Infants through to Sixth Class. We use a range of methodologies including circle time, group work, paired work, oral discussion, written activities, art work, story-telling, social stories, role play and songs. Class Teachers and Special Educational Needs Teachers ensure that standards and rules are communicated in a way that *all* pupils, including younger pupils and pupils with Special Educational Needs, can understand. It is helpful to check this understanding from time to time, and some students may need opportunities to practise observing the rules, with feedback on their progress.

Examples of resources currently being used in our school to support these teaching methodologies include:

- Friends for Life
- Zippy's Friends



- Incredible Years
- Stay Safe
- RSE
- Walk Tall

The class teacher, as a professional, is best placed to respond to the current needs of the class, and will choose resources and methodologies accordingly. A library has been set up in the school which contains a bank of appropriate resources to support lessons on feelings and behaviour.

### **Staff Training**

We place significant value on continuing professional development with regard to behaviour management. Staff members have attended and will continue to attend training provided by NEPs, SESS, HSE, INTO online, Donegal Education Centre, Department of Education and others. The Board of Management and Parents' Committee release teachers for the purposes of this training, as well as providing financial support to pay for substitute teachers and necessary materials. The class teacher in consultation with the principal will decide which training is a priority for the school or class at that particular time.

### **Affirming and Promoting Good Behaviour**

The day-to-day excellence of school management and classroom teaching will enable most students to behave in ways that support their own learning and development. Teachers and other school staff have a range of strategies to promote good behaviour at class level and at school level.

Children are more likely to behave well when:

- they are given responsibility in the school and are involved in aspects of the development of the Code of Behaviour
- they understand why the code is important and their part in making it work
- they can see that the code works in a fair way
- there are standards that set high expectations for student behaviour
- the standards are clear, consistent and widely understood
- parents support the school by encouraging good learning behaviour
- there are good relationships between teachers, parents and students in a happy school atmosphere
- adults model the behaviour that is expected from students

Other strategies to encourage and promote good behaviour in our school include:



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- positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- effective school and class routines
- rewards for keeping school and class rules
- clear boundaries and rules for students
- helping students themselves to recognize and affirm good learning behaviour
- recognizing and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- exploring with students how people should treat each other
- involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules

#### **Incentives and Rewards**

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our code. Reward systems may be part of an overall school or class strategy, or may form part of a planned intervention to help an individual student to manage their own behaviour. Rewards systems will be closely linked in time to the behaviour that is being targeted i.e. a reward will be given immediately or soon after a behaviour is displayed.

The following are ways in which we reward or affirm pupils in our school:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment / sticker / stamper in a pupil's book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to a parent, written or verbal communication
- A special mention in Friday Assembly or the award for our Pupil of the Week Certificate



### **Responding to inappropriate behaviour**

*“Despite the best efforts of schools, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehavior 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 even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.”*

*(Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools p. 46)*

Where inappropriate behaviour occurs, and is disruptive to the learning and/or welfare of others, the school will weigh up the needs of all involved. Professional skill and judgement will be applied to each individual case and school authorities will draw on factual and objective information about the impact of a pupil’s behaviour as well as the impact that the sanction may have on the pupil. Throughout, a problem-solving approach will be applied, prioritizing the early involvement of parents.

This problem-solving approach will take the following form:

<b>ACTIONS</b>
Gather information. Understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour
Generate ideas about possible solutions
Decide and agree on specific strategies
Implement the agreed strategy consistently
Review progress



### **Recording Behaviour**

As a whole school strategy for dealing with inappropriate behaviour, the school provides a reporting template (Incidents of Misbehaviour). This template includes ways of describing the nature, intensity and persistence of the behaviour. The report should be detached and objective. The report allows the school to track any child's behaviour which is a cause of concern, and will be used to facilitate a meeting with the parent. The report will be completed with the child and will be stored in the child's file as a method of tracking.

A further support used by the school, where appropriate, is asking the child to give a written account of what happened. This may include prompt or clarifying questions from the teacher. It is important to note that this record is confidential and is most accurate if given on the day.

### **Intervention**

Three levels of interventions take place in our school –

Support for all (Classroom Support)

Additional support for some students (School Support)

Specialised support for a few students (School Support Plus).

At each level, parental and family support is sought. If a pupil is receiving support with their behaviour, a plan is written up with the class teacher, parents (and SET, where relevant) which documents strategies to be put in place, as well as a date for review.

Specialised behaviour management strategies, such as the use of restraint, should never be used without expert advice, training and monitoring.

### **Clearly defined roles and responsibilities**

The class teacher is best placed to deal with routine incidences of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies, thus minimizing the need for other interventions. The class teacher is in an established position of trust and will have a strong influence with the students. As part of the whole-school plan, teachers provide input into the school's Code of Behaviour and provide a uniform approach to behaviour strategies being used in the classroom. The Code is also available for SET or substitute teachers. All teachers have a role to play in encouraging good behaviour and following the class code in relation to classroom management strategies or dealing with misbehaviour.



### **Bullying and harassment**

Bullying and/or harassment is unacceptable and prohibited in Killygordon National School under our Bí Cineálta and Harassment policies. Alleged breaches of the school's bullying policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

## **MISBEHAVIOUR**

Our Expectations for Students:

**Respect:** Students are expected to treat everyone with kindness and consideration.

**Responsibility:** Students should take ownership of their actions, both in class and at play.

**Integrity:** Students are encouraged to be honest and fair in all their dealings.

### **Understanding Misbehaviour:**

Misbehaviour is classified into three categories based on its severity. The response to each category is designed to be fair and appropriate for the situation.

#### **1. Minor Misbehaviour**

Examples: Talking out of turn, forgetting homework, minor disruptions, or uniform refusal

Response: A simple reminder or short conversation with the teacher, possibly resulting in loss of break time or privileges, or behaviour reflection sheet to be completed in either school or at home. If minor misbehaviour continues, an informal 'word' with parents may be beneficial here.



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**2. Serious Misbehaviour**

Examples: Bullying\*, damaging school property, leaving school without permission, or repeated minor issues.

Response: A meeting with parents is this formal teacher/parent yes, formal meeting, a behaviour improvement plan, and possibly removal from certain activities or privileges.

**3. Severe Misbehaviour**

Examples: Physical aggression, theft, possession of prohibited items, or serious bullying (continued or unresolved maybe).

Response: Immediate action by the principal, a meeting with parents is this teacher, principal/parent, and possibly suspension or exclusion.

*\*Please note that our school's Bí Cineálta policy will also be implemented in instances of bullying-related behaviours.*



## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

### **Teachers investigate**

Teachers are neutral in handling behaviour issues. They listen to all parties involved, gather information, and make decisions based on facts, ensuring fairness for everyone. Their role is to address the behaviour, not to judge or take personal sides. This process can take longer in certain circumstances, in others, it can be dealt with on the same day.

### **Confidentiality and "Justice"**

Teachers and staff respect the privacy of each child. Parents are not entitled to details about sanctions imposed on other children. Pupils may or may not be aware of sanctions imposed on other children. It must be noted that sharing such information would breach confidentiality and could cause unnecessary conflict. In line with the Code of Behaviour guidelines, appropriate action will be taken to address behaviour in a fair and consistent manner, to ensure all students are treated equally and with respect.

### **Teachers Use Professional Judgement**

We are committed to addressing all matters of behaviour with fairness, professionalism, and care. Our staff make decisions based on established protocols, evidence, and a full understanding of each child's individual circumstances, history, and context. These decisions are guided by our goal to support every student's growth and to maintain a positive learning environment for all.

While we value open communication with parents, decisions about appropriate consequences are made in line with our Code of Behaviour and the professional judgement of our teachers. This ensures consistency and fairness for every child. We appreciate your trust and partnership as we work together to support your child's well-being and success.



## SANCTIONS

Sanctions or consequences will be used in the following ways:

- A student will be informed when they have breached the code and that this breach warrants a sanction.
- It will be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- In order to ascertain the seriousness of a particular behaviour, it will depend of several factors, besides the actual behaviour itself – the frequency, duration and persistence of the behaviour; whether it is part of an escalating pattern of poor behaviour; the context of the behaviour.

**A sanction should:**

- 1. Defuse and not escalate a situation**
- 2. Preserve the dignity of all parties**
- 3. Be applied in a fair and consistent way**
- 4. Be timely.**

Sanctions will, at all times, be appropriate to the age and development stage of the pupils and take into account the cultural background of the pupil. Sanctions will be sensitive to the particular circumstances of vulnerable individuals or groups of pupils (e.g. children in care, children with special educational needs or other special circumstances).

The steps below will be taken when a pupil behaves inappropriately. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and, if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this.

**The use of sanctions will be determined by the teacher in charge, using professional judgement and background knowledge. The list below is not exhaustive, nor is it in a particular order.**

- Quiet conversation with teacher
- Removal of privileges e.g. iPad time, temporary separation from peers
- One minute of reflection time during break (this will be increased according to the severity of the misbehaviour)
- Behaviour Reflection Sheet
- Communication with parents



**Further sanctions will include:**

- Communication with Principal (teacher and/or child)
- Communication with parents
- Referral to Principal
- Detention
- Suspension
- Formal report to Board of Management
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety. Temporarily removing a student from a classroom / activity to a supervised location may be appropriate in the interests of classroom management in order to ensure the learning of other students and to help the student recognise and learn about the impact of their behaviour.

This Code of Behaviour applies outside of school where the children are still the responsibility of the school e.g. school tours and outings, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

Where a student is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside of the school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school, a judgement would have to be made that there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work, before the Code of Behaviour applies.

**Suspension and Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, 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 repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. The decision to suspend a pupil on serious groups will take into account:

- Whether the pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- Where the pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety (of staff or other pupils)
- Whether the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of misconduct may be grounds for suspension.



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Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to meet with the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the School Principal to discuss their child's case. Parents will be informed of the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone, verbally or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may be suspended for a period. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

#### **Immediate Suspension**

In the case of immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The student will not be sent home without first notifying parents. Immediate suspension may be considered by the Principal for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All the conditions for suspension will apply to immediate suspension.

#### **Removal of Suspension**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class. The class teacher will also have a plan to help the student take responsibility for catching up on work missed.

#### **Children with Special Educational Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special education teacher, and/or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development and recommendations from professional reports will be taken into account at all times.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a



supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals. The use of sanctions may be necessary to help a pupil with Special Educational Needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student.

**A shared ethos for the school emphasises care, respect and responsibility for the inclusive education of all pupils.**

### **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Normally the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try and find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking assistance of support services e.g. NEPS, HSE, NCSE etc.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. However, the key difference where expulsion is considered, is where the school has tried a series of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student be expelled for a first offence. These circumstances include:

- A serious threat of violence against another school or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

The sanction of expulsion will be imposed in accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000) and the Education Act (1998).

### **Appeals**

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education (*Education Act 1998 section 29*). An appeal may also be made where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.

Current Circular: 22/02 (Parents will be notified of any updates to this circular)



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#### **Methods of Communicating with Parents**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers will develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school – via Aladdin schools app
- School notice board
- School newsletter
- Communication Book (in some circumstances)



### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Teachers are responsible for monitoring and observing the behaviour of the pupils under their care.
- The class teacher will deal with routine incidents of misbehaviour through classroom management strategies.
- The Special Education Teacher will ensure that class rules are maintained with the pupils under his / her care. He or she will follow the whole school approach of class rules, explicit teaching, rewards and consequences. Routine incidents of misbehaviour will be dealt with according to the classroom rules and routines.
- The School Principal is in charge of ensuring that procedures outlined in the policy are followed as closely as possible.
- Pupils will be encouraged to inform the class teacher of incidents of inappropriate behaviour, which they may have been exposed to or have been involved in.
- Parents must read and sign an agreement to comply with the school's code of behaviour upon enrolment and any updated codes thereafter.
- Parents have a duty of care to report misbehaviour to the child's teacher (not another member of staff) in the first instance, if the school is not aware of it.
- The role of parents is one of co-operation and all dealings with the school must be respectful.
- All school staff will have a shared approach to dealing with incidents of misbehaviour. This shared approach also extends to conversations with parents and ensuring that school management is informed of any inappropriate communication.
- School management have responsibility to provide support and guidance to school staff in the implementation of this policy.

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### **Success Criteria**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure effectiveness. Teachers will be in a position to evaluate the policy by observing and noting behaviour of the pupils and the effectiveness of the various procedures followed. Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils will also be noted. The success of the Code rests upon the following essential elements:

- Communicating the code
- Teaching students the behavioural and learning skills they need
- Securing parental support for the code
- Monitoring behaviour in the school
- Reviewing the code
- Staff feeling confident and supported



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**Implementation Date**

This policy is to be implemented once ratified by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

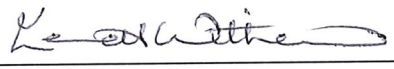
All parents will read and sign an agreement to comply with the School's Code of Behaviour thereafter.

**Timetable for review**

This policy will be reviewed on June 2029 to ensure effectiveness, and to update if necessary.

**Ratification and Communication**

When ratified by the Board of Management, this policy will be circulated to all school parents.

Signed:   
(Chairperson)

Date: 17/6/26

Signed: Diana Keatley-Robb  
(Principal)

Date: 17/6/2026