

St. Colman's National School - Code of Behaviour 2025-26

The Code of Behaviour of St. Colman's National School reflects the vision and values of our school and the guidelines "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" published by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB, 2008). The Code of Behaviour also conforms with legislation as required by Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000). It translates the expectations of the school community into practical arrangements, routines and procedures which ensure that its aims are implemented and that the particular needs and circumstances of our school and community are met. When parents enrol their child in St. Colman's, they are agreeing to support the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and other policies in the school.

I. Aims:

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are as follows:

- To foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected, explained, understood and supported.
- To help create a positive learning environment in which all pupils can benefit from the education system and achieve their personal best.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community as well as caring for the school and its environment.
- 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 ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

II. Principles Underlining Our Code:

- Every effort will be made to ensure that our code is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner and that all members of staff adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
- Differences amongst our pupils e.g. S.E.N. pupils will be acknowledged.
- A whole school approach will be adopted. This requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation and sense of ownership from all the stake holders –teachers, parents, pupils, ancillary staff and BOM.
- Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

III. Whole school approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

School Rules

1. Children come properly prepared for school and are punctual. School starts at 9.20 a.m.
2. Children must have respect and have consideration for other students. Bullying is totally unacceptable behaviour.
3. The instruction of each teacher must be respected.
4. Children must act in a proper manner around the school. Climbing of walls and trees is not encouraged.
5. Children must be tidy and careful with school property.
6. Bad or distasteful language is prohibited.
7. Children must not leave school grounds during school hours.
8. Chewing gum is prohibited.
9. Rules relating to healthy lunches should be observed by all.
10. A written note from parents/ guardians must explain a child's absence. This note can now also be submitted through Aladdin Connect.
11. Parents should make an appointment to see the teacher as classes cannot be left unsupervised.

An effective Code of Behaviour requires the co-operation of all stakeholders in the school. To this end there are specific roles and responsibilities in achieving high standards of behaviour in our school.

Expectations of Staff

- Teachers are expected to adhere to the Code of Professional Behaviour and Practice for teachers as developed by the Teaching Council of Ireland.
- As a staff we work together to devise reward/sanction programmes as necessary and we undergo any professional development necessary to ensure that there is a united front in dealing with behavioural matters.
- The SPHE curriculum also supports our Code of Behaviour. This curriculum helps children to develop communication and problem-solving skills while fostering self-esteem. Implementation of programmes such as *Circle Time* also takes place to promote positive behaviour.
- For children with Special Educational Needs who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their needs, special education teachers and class teachers liaise regularly to develop behavioural targets for such children consulting with NEPS as necessary.
- This behaviour policy is circulated to all teachers. All temporary or new staff are also made aware of the policy and its content. Through regular staff meetings and good communication, the policy is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.

Expectations of Parents

- Positive relationships are built from the start with parents and they are encouraged to take an active role in the development of their child. Teachers work in collaboration with parents to develop any specific behaviour plans needed for their child.
- There are clear channels through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a pupil.
- On the Junior Infant open day every June, parents are given a copy of the school rules and the expectations of pupils are discussed, along with the role of parents in helping pupils to meet these expectations. Parents are encouraged to share information about anything that might affect a pupil's behaviour in school, and are informed how to go about doing this.
- Parents are notified early if there is a concern about a pupil's behaviour, so that ways of helping the pupils can be discussed and agreed.
- The school has a Parents Association. Parents are encouraged to get involved in this association as a structure through which they can work together for the best possible education for their children.
- Parents are expected to:
 - Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform.
 - Be courteous towards pupils and staff.
 - Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/ Principal through the teacher/ Principal.
 - Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same.
 - Label pupils' coats and other property.
 - Supervise their young children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school.

Expectations of Pupils

- At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children which reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children.
- Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

IV. Content of the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour covers the following areas:

- a) General Standards of Behaviour
- b) Bullying
- c) Behaviour in class
- d) Behaviour in the playground

- e) Behaviour in the school environment
- f) Behaviour on school trips/outings
- g) Attendance at school
- h) Homework

a) General Expected Behaviour

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have the correct uniform, books and required materials and to be in the correct place at the correct time.
- Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's lawful instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.

b) Bullying

- Bullying is a pattern of deliberate abuse – physical, verbal or emotional, by an individual or group that adversely affects a pupil's well being.
- The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, exclusion, taunting, damage to property or theft and more recently cyber bullying which involves the use of ICT. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's **Bí Cineálta Policy**.

c) Classroom Conduct

- Pupils are expected to respect the right of other pupils to learn and to avoid disrupting the work of the classroom.
- Pupils are expected to have respect for their teachers and follow instructions given by them.
- Pupils are expected to go to and from their classroom in an orderly manner. Running is not allowed at any time in classrooms or corridor.
- Pupils are expected to show courtesy and respect towards other pupils.
- Visitors should be greeted politely and pupils should continue to work quietly.
- Pupils should have their own basic equipment; books, pens, pencils, rubbers, colouring pencils etc.
- No unnecessary money should be brought to school.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in school.
- On wet days, children in classrooms are allowed to play with board games/cards or watch programmes/ DVDs chosen by the class teacher.

d) Expected Behaviour in the yard

- All pupils are encouraged to enjoy their games in the playground. It is expected that such activities will proceed without interference from other children.
- Bullying, rough play, spitting, teasing, fighting and intimidation shall not be tolerated.
- Pupils must play within their own designated areas in the school yard.
- The following behaviours are also forbidden: piggy backs, handstands, swinging out of railings and lifting other pupils and any other behaviour which the supervising teacher deems unsafe.
- If a physical fight occurs in the yard, the participants are separated and sent to the Principal /Deputy Principal.
- Students are not permitted to bring lunch into the playground at big break.
- When the bell rings, pupils should stop and walk to their lines.

e) Behaviour in General School Environment:

- Pupils are expected to move about the school in an orderly manner.
- Pupils shall not remain on the school premises after school has finished.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for school property.
- Pupils are expected to come to and from school with due care for other pupils, for property, for traffic and pedestrians.

f) Expected Behaviour re. School Outings

School tours and outings are enjoyed by all pupils in the school. When on school tours, children are expected:

- To enter/leave the bus in an orderly manner.
- To arrive 15 minutes before departure time. Parents are expected to contact the school 15 minutes before departure time if a child is sick or unable to attend.
- To keep the school rules as listed above.
- Not to bring mobile phones or electronic devices on school tours. Teachers will have mobile phones on tour if parents/children need to get in contact with one another.
- To sit in their seats and avoid loudness that would distract the driver.
- To take drinks/ food at the appointed lunch breaks.
- To stay in their appointed groups at all times.
- To wear uniform on school tours unless stated otherwise.

g) Attendance and Dismissal

- School begins at 9.20 a.m. for all pupils. The infant day ends at 2.00 p.m. All other classes end at 3.00 p.m.

- Lunch break is from 12.30 p.m. to 1.00 p.m. Every Tuesday lunch break is from 1.00 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. to facilitate Irish dancing in the school.
- The school cannot accept responsibility for children in the school area before the official opening time of 9.20 a.m. or after 3.00 p.m.
- Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, clearly stating the reason for absence. The Principal is required by law to report such absences to the National Educational Welfare Board.
- Pupils are expected to be on time for school each day and, in the event of a late arrival, bring a note to the teacher. Please note that where a child attends school after attendance has been taken he / she will be marked absent.
- No child will be allowed to leave school during school hours without a signed letter stating time child is to be collected. Alternatively parents may call to the school and having consulted with the class teacher, the Principal or Deputy Principal may bring child home.
- If a child is sick during school hours we will endeavour to contact his/her home. It is important that every child has a phone number where his/her parents can be contacted. Parents who will be absent from home, or normal place of work, should arrange a contact phone number in case an emergency should arise.
- A child who is sick in the morning should not be sent to school unless there are strong indications that it is a minor matter that will not necessitate him/ her being sent home.

h) Rules regarding Misc. items

- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have the correct uniform, books and required materials each day.
- Tracksuits and runners are essential for physical education and should be worn only on the appropriate days.
- Jewellery: Students are encouraged not wear any jewellery to school. Girls are permitted to wear stud earrings only.
- No dying of hair is encouraged.
- Toys and other electronic devices are not permitted in the school
- Mobile Phones are not permitted in the school.

V. Ladder of Intervention

- Consistent clear rules and routines in class and in school assist the majority of pupils to behave appropriately. Minor misbehaviour will be checked regularly by the class teacher.
- More active interventions will be used to help some students manage their behaviour including; parental involvement, setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way, behaviour contracts and the involvement of another teacher/ Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Interventions tried and how the pupil responded will be noted.

VI. Rewards

Our policy is to promote and encourage good standards of behaviour. It is therefore essential that it be rewarded and be seen to be reinforced by the following:

- Good behaviour is constantly acknowledged by teachers, Principal and ancillary staff throughout the day.
- Pupil's journal is used to convey positive behaviour to parents.
- Each teacher recognises and acknowledges good behaviour in their own class and may develop systems of rewarding individuals/groups of children on a regular basis.

VII. Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

In order to facilitate the smooth running of the school, to ensure the safety of all and to maintain an orderly atmosphere for learning, sanctions/behaviour checks must and will be imposed where inappropriate behaviour occurs. It must be clear why the sanction is being applied and what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions. When sanctions are used pupils should understand that what they have done is not acceptable and that it is the behaviour that is rejected, not the child. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are categorised according to age level and the nature of misbehaviour. The following are samples of unacceptable behaviours. This is not an exhaustive list.

Minor Misbehaviours:

Homework not done and no note, rudeness, borrowing items without asking, inattentiveness, answering out of turn, alienating friends, not wearing uniform.

Serious Misbehaviours:

Fighting, bullying, bad language, bad attitude, name calling, exclusion, rough play, disrespecting others, hitting, back talking, belittling personal comments, damaging play equipment or school property, stealing, leaving school premises without permission.

Gross Misbehaviours

Gross Misbehaviours are where a student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the safe operation of the school. **A single incident of gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.**

Examples of Gross Misbehaviour include:

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a pupil/staff member.
- Leaving school premises during school day without permission.
- Deliberately damaging school property.
- Serious physical violence which threatens safety of other pupils.

It should be noted that persistent misbehaviour may also warrant a period of suspension.

VIII. Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features:

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences.
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

The following steps will be taken when the child behaves inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this. The particular stage used will depend on the seriousness of the misbehaviour. Communication with parents / guardians through notes, phone calls or meetings will occur where necessary so that parents / guardians are involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

1. Reasoning with the pupil (including advice on how to improve).
2. Reprimand or warning regarding behaviour.
3. Class strategies such as: reasoning with pupil, reprimand, temporary separation from the rest of the class and/or additional work are implemented and parents are informed.
4. Loss of privileges.
5. If the misbehaviour persists the parents will receive a formal letter issued by the class teacher. It will inform the parents of the strategies that have been tried and proven unsuccessful. It will also inform them that the strategies will continue to be tried, that the child is being given another chance and that if the misbehaviour persists the process will proceed to subsequent stages. A copy of the letter shall be logged by the class teacher, who shall notify the Principal/Deputy Principal.
6. Referral to Principal/ Deputy Principal- Parents will receive a written request to attend at the school to meet the Class Teacher and the Principal.
7. Temporary suspension.
8. Expulsion.

IX. Suspension

Section 21 (4) of the Education (Welfare) 2000 Act requires that if a pupil is suspended for a period of not less than six days The Education Welfare officer shall be informed, by notice in writing. The authority to suspend rests with the Principal and the Deputy Principal for periods of up to three days. Where the cumulative total of days suspension reaches six, the NEWB will be notified. The following procedures will apply:

- Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.

- If suspension is still decided upon, the Principal notifies parents in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:
 - a) The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
 - b) The reasons for the suspension.
 - c) Any study programme to be followed.
 - d) The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
 - e) The provision for appeal to the Board of Management or secretary general of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)

Factors which influence a decision to suspend are as follows:

- The nature, seriousness, impact and context of the behaviour.
- The interventions tried to date.
- Whether suspension is the appropriate response.
- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils e.g. shouting at teacher, being disruptive, refusing 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 incidents of bullying, use of bad language to any member of school community.

X. Expulsion

The decision to permanently exclude a pupil from St. Colman's National School will be made solely by the B.O.M. Expulsion is a very serious step and is 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 pupil change his/her behaviour.
- Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of the behaviour (if it should persist).
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive Community Services (HSE), 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 which unfortunately haven't changed the pupil's behaviour.

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.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal:
 - Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
 - Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal (see page 84 NEWB guidelines).
- Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing (see page 84 NEWB Guidelines).
- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing (page 85 NEWB Guidelines).
- If BOM is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification. The NEWB should be notified using a **Notice of Intention to Expel form** which is available on www.schoolreturn.ie or from their helpline (1890 36 3666). This form should be completed and sent to **School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green St, Dublin 7**.
- Consultations arranged by the EWO.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

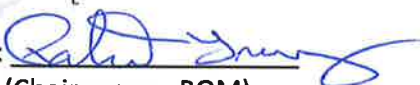
Appeals

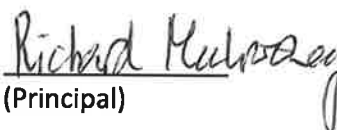
Parents may appeal the decision to expel to the Secretary General of DES. The appeals process under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the appointment of a mediator. An appeal may also be brought by NEPS on behalf of the pupil.

Ratification, Implementation and Communication

This policy was formally reviewed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on:

Date: 16/9/2025

Signed: 
(Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: 
(Principal)

It will be implemented immediately.

It has been communicated to all members of staff and is available to parents, from the Principal's office.

Scoil Naomh Colmáin

