

## **Culmore N.S. Code of Behaviour and Discipline**

### **Introduction:**

The Code of Behaviour and Discipline is a set of rules and guidelines drawn up by the teaching staff of Culmore N.S. and approved by the Board of Management. The code is in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills guidelines and rules and is designed to meet the particular needs of this school.

### **Rationale:**

The Board of Management of Culmore N.S. decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in the National Educational Welfare booklet 'Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools' (May 2008). It also recognised that a Code of Behaviour is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 Section 23

(1) and this act states that this code will specify:

- the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those Standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student and
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The code outlines the rules for the pupils and the procedures to be adopted by parents in their communication with the school. The code is designed in the best interests of all the pupils of the school to ensure that children will learn and play in a happy and healthy environment. It is designed in the interests of the teachers, that they will be respected by all, as professionals and that they will work in harmony together for the well being of the school community, while being fair and consistent in these efforts. It is designed in the interests of parents, that they identify their crucial role in co-operating with the school in the implementation of the code.

### **General Principles**

- All pupils have a right to receive an education in a safe, calm, supportive and purposeful atmosphere.
- All pupils have a right to be accommodated in our school and to feel welcome in an inclusive learning environment.
- All who work in our school will be expected to deal with people in an inclusive and respectful manner.
- Those who visit our school will be expected to uphold our Code where self respect and respect for others lie at its core.
- The school places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions and the ideal is that the pupils will acquire the skills of self-discipline.

- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences.
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation and respect

The Code of Behaviour and Discipline covers the following areas:

1. The School Ethos.
2. Behaviour in class.
3. Behaviour in the playground.
4. Behaviour in the school environment.
5. Behaviour on school tours and outings.
6. Sanctions.
7. Attendance at school.
8. Homework.
9. Parents Role.

### **1. The School Ethos:**

The Ethos of our school is based on the belief that education makes a fundamentally important contribution to the quality and well being of society and that the teacher is the professional, trained specifically to administer the education in the school.

Primary Education aims to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to equip him/her to avail himself/herself of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society. Therefore, the school is first and foremost a learning environment in which each pupil is expected to present himself/herself for school in a way that is receptive to the education on offer. For this reason any conduct or behaviour that is not in accord with this approach and interferes with the opportunities of others to benefit from their schooling will not be entertained and will be regarded as a serious breach of school discipline. While learning is one of the principal aims of the school, it is not the only one and so reasonable standards of behaviour, courtesy, appearance and cleanliness are expected of all pupils and breaches of this requirement will be brought to the attention of the parents.

As a staff committed to the realisation of the aims of primary education, our aims are to respect and to try as far as reasonably possible to cater for the needs of each individual pupil. We aim to create a happy, secure environment for all pupils, in which there is a sense of good order and a reasonable, fair and consistent approach to discipline and to create an open communication system in the school where respect is shown to the teachers and where a high degree of consensus about standards of behaviour exists.

These aims are achieved by having rules and guidelines to direct behaviour and procedures for the good of all.

The aims of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline are to create a positive learning environment in which every pupil can benefit from school, to help pupils to become self-disciplined, to encourage good standards of behaviour and to care in a practical way for pupils, teachers, the school and its environment. Thus a positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between pupils, teachers and parents and it permeates all the activities of the school and it helps in the formation of a strong sense of social cohesion within the school. A positive school ethos is promoted and encouraged for pupils and staff through praise and reward. A simple few words of praise or a simple gesture of approval or reward can have a huge positive effect on a child's self-esteem and their desire to achieve. This is often done both formally and informally in school eg, a "bualadh bós" from the class, Star of the Week, showing good work to another teacher, the child may be given a special privilege or responsibility or a note home praising great effort. Encouraging children to have a sense of pride in their actions, academically and socially, is fundamental in our school.

## **2. Behaviour in Class:**

- Courtesy and respect are basic to classroom behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards a teacher or a parent, e.g. cheek, defiance, insolence, constant talking or other disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Pupils must respect the right of others to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with that right, e.g. constant disruption of the class or persistent distraction of others is considered unacceptable behaviour.
- In order that pupils benefit from the work in class, full co-operation is required from pupils at all times. Pupils must co-operate with any instruction given by the teacher.
- Pupils must always address each other, the teachers and other adults with respect and politeness.
- Pupils must show respect for their own belongings, belongings of others and those of the school.
- Pupils must always do their best, complete tasks as well as possible (including homework) and be sure not to interrupt the work of others.
- Pupils are not allowed to throw any objects in the classroom.
- Pupils must remain quiet and do their work when the teacher is attending to a visitor to the school.
- If a pupil fails to complete their work in class due to their own misbehaviour, pupils may be required to complete the task at home.

*All the above rules also apply when there is a visiting teacher e.g. sports coach, guest speaker, substitute teacher etc.*

### **3. Behaviour in the Playground:**

- Pupils should treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers others is not permitted e.g., fighting, kicking, spitting, tripling, slide tackling, hitting, shoving, name calling, cursing etc.
- Games or activities considered to be dangerous are forbidden.
- Playing behind or at the side of the prefab and playroom is forbidden.
- No child is allowed to climb up on a roof or leave the school grounds to retrieve a ball or for any other reason without the strict supervision of a teacher.
- Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason e.g., to go to the toilet, during breaks without the permission of the teacher on supervision.
- Children are not allowed to carry another child as they may cause damage in the process.
- Children are not permitted to eat their lunches in the playground, unless told to do so.
- Children are expected to keep the school grounds tidy and to show respect for the environment.
- On wet days, pupils will remain in the classroom during break times and play board games, draw/ colour or watch a DVD.
- A teacher supervises the playground at all break times.
- A teacher supervises both classrooms as the children eat their lunches.
- A notebook will be kept of misbehaviours in the yard. If a child's name is entered into the notebook 3 times in one week, parents will be informed and sanctions may be imposed.

### **4. Behaviour in the school environment:**

- Respect and sensitivity to others are basic rules.
- There is zero tolerance of Bullying in this school.
- Any kind of verbal, physical or emotional abuse of others is strictly forbidden.
- Bad language, sexual language or sexual innuendo of any kind, is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated.
- Pupils must show respect for school property, pupils' property and teachers' property at all times and defacing or damaging of such is forbidden. Graffiti on doors, walls, or furniture will be regarded as a serious offence.

- Dangerous equipment, mobile phones and games consoles will be confiscated.
- No climbing is allowed.
- For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the inside of the school building in an orderly fashion. Running is strictly forbidden.
- Children are asked to respect and care for library books and school owned books.
- Children are not allowed to take chewing gum to school

## **5. Behaviour on school tours and outings:**

- Pupils must stay together, close to the teacher, especially in crowded areas or close to busy roads.
- WALK in two's - don't run.
- Pupils must always seek teachers permission before leaving the group (e.g. visit to the toilet) and signal to the teacher when they have returned.
- When getting on and off the bus, children must do so in an orderly fashion, without pushing or skipping the queue.
- When travelling, children must stay seated and belted and cause no distraction to the bus driver.
- Every pupil must pay close attention to directions from the teacher, arrangements, times etc and adhere to them.
- Co-operative behaviour, good manners and respect for our hosts and general public will be expected at all times.
- Children must take responsibility for their own possessions, money and purchases.
- Mobile phones and games consoles are not permitted.
- Every child must have permission in writing from parents to join any tour or outing. Routine visits to the swimming pool, church and other schools will be signed for when the child joins the school and thereby will be exempt.

***All children without exemption must abide by these rules. Failure to do so may mean that access to school trips will be denied for health and safety reasons.***

## **6. Sanctions:**

Encouraging high standards of behaviour among pupils and creating and maintaining an orderly atmosphere for learning in the school will involve the use of praise and reward for good behaviour. It will also involve the application of sanctions or punishments to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. When sanctions are invoked, pupils should be told what they have done is not acceptable and that this misbehaviour has resulted in a sanction or punishment.

Teachers may vary the method in which they impose sanctions, due to age appropriateness, but the following are a list of standard sanctions used throughout the school:

1. REASONING: the child's attention is drawn to the broken rule and to the desired behaviour. He/she is reminded of the consequences of breaking the rules a second time.
2. VERBAL REPRIMAND: including advice on how to improve.
3. TEMPORARY REMOVAL FROM THE CLASS/GROUP (Time Out): This can be in the class or yard.
4. DETENTION: This may be in class or in the yard, depending on where supervision is available.
5. REFERRAL TO ANOTHER TEACHER
6. REFERRAL TO THE PRINCIPAL: If there is no improvement, the pupil will be referred to the principal to discuss his/her behaviour problems and suggest ways in which they can be overcome.
7. EXTRA HOMEWORK AND A NOTE TO PARENTS: Where there is no improvement and the problem behaviour persists, extra homework will be given and a note will be sent home to parents/guardians to explain the situation. A copy will be kept on file, with detailed records of the problem behaviour in relation to safety and disruption of teaching and learning.
8. MEET WITH PARENTS: Where the problem persists, parents will be invited to come to the school to meet with the teacher or principal to work on a plan, in collaboration, to solve the problem. Where necessary, a formal individual behaviour intervention plan will be drawn up, discussed and approved by home and school, implemented and monitored in detail.
9. EXCLUSION FROM EXTRA- CURRICULAR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES: Temporary exclusion from school activities may be enforced for reasons of safety or where there is a direct link with the behaviour.
10. OUTSIDE INTERVENTION: Where there is persistent challenging behaviour, serious safety concerns or an observable escalation of problem behaviour, outside intervention will be sought through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or other appropriate agencies, with the agreement of the parents and the principal.
11. SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION: Where there is persistent challenging behaviour, serious safety concerns, disruption or an observable escalation of problem behaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested to attend at the school to meet with the Chairperson and principal. If the parents 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 Rule 130(S) of the Rules for National Schools under Department of Education and Skills rules. Continuously disruptive pupils or a pupil guilty of a serious breach of discipline may be excluded from the school. The maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days. The Board of Management may authorise a further period of expulsion up to a

maximum of ten school days. There is a right of appeal to the Board of Management where a pupil is permanently excluded from the school.

Exclusion can be warranted for a first offence which include the following:

- A sexual assault
- Supplying illegal substances to other pupils in the school.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.

***Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí.***

## **7. Attendance:**

- Regular attendance and punctuality are required. (9:20am-3:00pm) Parents are required (Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 18) to notify the school, by letter or phone call, of the reason for a child's absence. The principal is legally obliged to notify TUSLA of absences exceeding 20 school days (Section 21).
- When a child has to leave school early, a note or a phone call from the parents must be brought to the attention of the principal.
- Pupils requesting to go home for their lunch must have their parents sign an authorisation note requesting the child/children be allowed home for lunch and absolving the Board of Management and teachers from all claims of every kind and nature in respect of accident suffered by the child during lunch time. The authorisation note must be given to the principal.
- Pupils and parents should ensure that all copies, books and other equipment necessary for class each day are brought to school.

## **8. Homework:**

- It is the policy of the school to assign a reasonable amount of homework on a regular basis. All homework must be done promptly and completely. This may include memorisation, written tasks, drawing, reading, spellings, research on the internet or other tasks. The pupils record their homework in their homework journal each day and a parent must sign each day to say that homework has been completed.
- If, for some reason homework cannot be completed, parents are asked to send a note to explain the reason. A record of failures to do homework will be kept for future reference.
- Failure to do homework will be recorded and brought to the attention of parents and is regarded as a breach of school rules.
- Books on loan from the school or used in school must be kept clean, covered, named and repaired where necessary. It is not necessary to cover copies but, it is recommended to use plastic copy covers.

## **9. Parents:**

Children feel happier and more secure when there is order, predictability and a peaceful environment in which to learn. School rules that are fairly applied, a friendly and happy environment, well organised classrooms and good relationships between school and home can contribute to make a dynamic and effective school. To maintain good standards of behaviour, the school requires the support and co-operation of the parents. As parents have the primary responsibility for the behaviour of their children, parents have a significant role in helping the school run as smoothly as possible.

Parents are asked to:

- Familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Co-operate with the school in regard to the implementation of its policy on discipline, through the process of signing the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Visit the school when requested to do so, especially for annual parent-teacher meetings.
- Follow the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour and discipline.
- Contact the school when in need of guidance or advice on any aspect of the code.
- All problems relating to school should be raised with the class teacher and principal at first instance to reach a solution. It is unacceptable procedure for a parent to contact any member of the Board of Management without first discussing the matter with the class teacher and the principal. This procedure eliminates misunderstandings.
- All communication on school related matters should be addressed to the school during school time. Parents are asked not to contact the teachers in the privacy of their own homes, except in the case of emergency.



**Implementation:**

This policy was implemented in January 2007.

**Review:**

This policy was reviewed in January 2011.

This policy was reviewed and updated in June 2015.

This policy was reviewed and updated in March 2018.

**Ratification and Communication:**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of Culmore N.S on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management of Culmore N.S.)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please sign and return this page to the school*

**Code of Behaviour and Discipline**  
**Culmore N.S.**

I/We have read the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and have discussed the school rules and sanctions with my child/children. I/We agree that our child/children will adhere to the rules of the school and any sanctions that may be imposed.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_