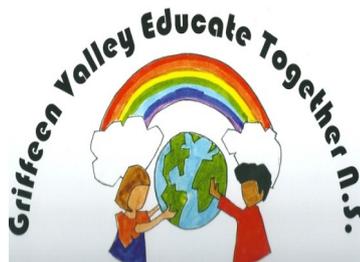


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Griffen Valley ETNS

Code of Good Behaviour

Background – Development of this Policy

This Code of Good Behaviour of Griffen Valley School has been developed with input from students, parents, staff and the Board of Management. Different strands of the policy have been developed by different members of the school community, with the full policy being subject to review by parents and staff prior to its ratification by the Board of Management. The policy draws on the experience and insights of our school's children, parents and guardians, staff and management, and complies with the guidelines of the National Educational Welfare Board. The Code of Good Behaviour should be read alongside the Anti-Bullying Policy (ratified in June 2014), which is available on the school website.

Our School's Mission

Our school's vision statement appears in the School Handbook and states that our mission is:
“to provide a co-educational, multi-denominational, child-centred and democratically run Educate Together School in Griffen Valley, Lucan.”

The Charter of our patron body Educate Together schools states that

“An E.T. school aims to promote a philosophy of education in which no child is an outsider.....and which promotes the fullest development of ability irrespective of gender, class, ability, ethnicity [etc] and which encapsulates this ethos in a democratic partnership uniquely combining the involvement of parents with the professional role of teachers”.

In supporting this vision and the philosophy of Educate Together, the cornerstone of the school's approach to the management of the behaviour of our children emphasises a positive approach. While we recognise that the need to impose appropriate sanctions may arise, the overall emphasis is on creating an environment where positive behaviour is valued by all, and is accepted by all as the norm in school life. We believe strongly that the greater emphasis on the positive, the more effective results will be in the achievement of desired outcomes. Through praise, encouragement and appropriate rewards, school staff will elicit good behaviour from our children. The standards of behaviour expected in the school will be explicitly discussed in class in order to come to a shared understanding of these standards, and the reasons for setting such standards. Where these standards are not met, teachers and other staff will work with children (and, where appropriate, with their families) to ensure that their behaviour improves. All children will be encouraged to view positive behaviour as an integral part of school life.

Code of Behaviour – Our Vision

The principal role of this Code of Behaviour is to help staff, parents and pupils work together for a happy, harmonious, effective and safe school. Griffeen Valley School adopts a positive approach to the promotion of good behaviour and expects all members of its school community to show consideration and courtesy in their interactions with others.

Our school's Code of Good Behaviour is an important part of our school. It plays a crucial role in the promotion and implementation of our ethos of respect and equality. This code is necessary for a number of reasons:

- To ensure the safety and well-being of all children and staff;
- To create an atmosphere of respect and consideration for others within our school;
- To create an atmosphere that allows all children to meet their educational potential;
- To maintain a consistent and fair approach regarding rules, rewards and sanctions within the school;
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the procedures that form part of our Code of Good Behaviour, and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

Rights of Students, Staff and Parents

- Students – have the right to work, play and learn in a safe, friendly and supportive school environment, an environment in which they are fully able to develop their talents, interests and ambitions.
- Staff – have the right to work in a safe, friendly, respectful and supportive environment.
- Parents – have the right to feel welcome and to know their children will work, play and learn in a safe, friendly and supportive school environment.

Roles and Responsibilities

This Code of Behaviour applies at all times when children are in the care of the school. This includes time spent on the school grounds when entering and leaving before and after the school day, and time spent under the care of the school when off the school grounds (e.g. on school tours, or while participating in sporting or extra-curriculum activities).

All members of our school community should, through their interactions with each other, communicate in a way which encourages co-operation and respect. In the event of a difficulty or a misunderstanding between children during school hours, parents/carers should refer the alleged incident to the child's class teacher. Only in exceptional circumstances should a parent/carer approach a child other than their own.

Responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Good Behaviour rests with all partners in our school community. However, specific bodies have particular responsibilities as outlined below:

Board of Management:

- Oversees the development of the Code of Good Behaviour (including the school's Anti-Bullying Policy), and makes this available to the school community following ratification;
- Undertakes a regular review of the Code of Good Behaviour;
- Supports the principal and staff in the implementation of the Code;
- Ensures that the school community can function in a safe environment.

The Principal:

- Oversees the provision of a safe working/learning environment;
- Provides support for colleagues;
- Promotes a positive atmosphere in the school;
- Ensures that the Code of Good Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

Teaching Staff:

- Support and implement the school's code of good behaviour;
- Promote positive behaviour through effective teaching, an inclusive and engaging curriculum and well-managed classrooms;
- Use a variety of classroom management techniques and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation, and maximise positive behaviour;
- Are courteous, consistent and fair;
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour;
- Keep a written record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour;
- Provide support for colleagues;
- Communicate with parents as appropriate with a view to establishing and maintaining a good working relationship;
- Report matters of serious concern to the Principal [Deputy Principal];
- Record serious incidents of misbehaviour in the Yard Book.

Special Needs Assistants:

- Share in the responsibilities of Teaching Staff as appropriate;
- Support individual children with their care needs.

School Pupils:

- Attend school and are punctual;
- Bring the correct books/materials to school;
- Follow school rules and classroom rules;
- Listen to staff and act on their advice;
- Show respect for all members of our school community;
- Respect school property and the property of others;
- Behave in a safe manner that does not endanger others;
- Be mindful of including other children in games and activities.

Parents/Guardians

- Are familiar with the Code of Good Behaviour and support its implementation;
- Sign the Code of Good Behaviour form to confirm that it is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their children comply with the code;
- Ensure that their children attend school and are punctual;
- Are interested in, support and encourage their children's school work;
- Cooperate with teachers if their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others;
- Communicate with the school regarding any problems that might be affecting their child's progress or behaviour;
- Attend meetings at the school if requested;
- Are sure to be courteous and polite with school staff and with other parents at all times when on our premises.

School Rules

The Seven Golden Rules

Our school's code of good behaviour is based on the promotion of the Seven Golden Rules of Griffeen Valley ETNS

- Be on time and be prepared
- Do your work as best you can
- Be honest –don't cover up the truth
- Be respectful to all staff
- Be kind and helpful to other children
- Look after your school and your own property
- Do your best and try to make our school a happy and safe place for all.

Mobile phones

Mobile Phones should...

- Be turned off as the children enter the school gates.
- Be handed to the class teacher on arrival in class.
- Remain with the teacher until the end of the school day
- Only be turned on again when the child leaves through the school gates
- Failure to comply with these rules on mobile phones may result in the temporary confiscation of the phone.

Classroom Rules

The rules in each classroom draw heavily from the school's Seven Golden Rules.

However, given the importance of the children buying into school rules, some negotiation and discussion around classroom is beneficial and productive. Therefore, at the start of each school year, the teacher will lead a discussion on classroom rules in their own class and negotiate/agree a set of regulations that will facilitate and happy, safe and productive

classroom. It may be necessary during the school year to re-visit these agreed regulations. In any such process, the importance of discussion, negotiation and agreement will be a guiding feature.

Absence from School

Attendance at school is an essential part of children's education as it allows them to fully develop their potential. Griffeen Valley encourages full attendance by all its pupils to ensure that they have every opportunity to learn together with their peers. The following procedures are in place to highlight the importance of attendance:

- The class teacher is informed by note when a child has been absent, stating the reason for the absence and the date/dates. Forms are available in the Homework Journal for this purpose. These forms are used to record each child's history of absence.
- If a child is absent for 20 days or more in any one school year, the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is notified and end of year reports are made. In such a case, the NEWB may assign an Educational Welfare Officer to make contact with a family on receipt of an absence report.
- Where extenuating circumstances have been made known to the school they are included in the report to the NEWB.
- The school may work with individual children and their families to develop an individual attendance plan to ensure that the child's education is being completed.
- The school also keeps a record of lateness, early collection and/or return in the office.

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and sanctions serve the same purpose: to ensure good behaviour in our school. In the case of sanctions, the purpose is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping children to understand that:

- negative behaviour is not acceptable and has consequences;
- negative behaviour may be hurtful to others;
- they are responsible for their behaviour and that by making the right choices, they can change their behaviour

In all cases, sanctions are applied with this purpose in mind. Furthermore, they are applied in a way that seeks to resolve difficulties that arise, that do not demean or embarrass children. Sanctions will be imposed in a way that is appropriate to the misbehaviour that occurred, and that are fair and timely. In terms of appropriateness to the misbehaviour involved, any sanction will take into account:

- the frequency and level of persistence of misbehaviour;
- the pattern of misbehaviour: is behaviour improving or worsening?
- the context of the misbehaviour.

Rather than imposing a single formula of rewards and sanctions on every school class grouping, this policy recognizes that individual teachers have their preferences and have systems that are most in tune with their own classroom organisation priorities. Also, children at different ages benefit from systems that are age-targeted. For example, more straightforward schemes based on individual or group star charts work very well in infants. At the senior end of the school however, reward systems based on the Class Dojo System or the Good Choices Chart are much more effective. The system in place in each class is explicitly discussed with the children.

In the classroom setting, sanctions may include such things as:

- Verbal reprimand;
- Time-out in the class;
- Time-out in another class;
- Withdrawal of privileges;
- Being sent to the Principal's office.

In all decisions relating to the choice of Reward/Sanction System, priority will also be given to ensuring that the rewards offered have greater prominence than the sanctions allowed. This prioritisation is based on the belief that rewards are more effective in guiding children's behaviour than a system that is largely based on sanctions. As with all aspects of our children's education, teachers are happy to discuss with parents the approach to positive behaviour used in their classroom.

Serious misbehaviour

Instances of less serious misbehaviour in class are dealt with by individual teachers by way of the system of rewards and sanctions in operation in that teacher's class (see above). At the top end of this scale is misbehaviour that warrants the child being sent to the Principal. In cases of serious misbehaviour, intervention may be required to ensure that all members of the school community enjoy a safe environment and that teaching and learning proceed without interruption.

Where misbehaviour is of a less serious nature but is persistent, or is of a serious nature, contact with the child's parents/guardians will be made. Parents are encouraged to discuss the importance of good behaviour in school with their child.

In cases of serious misbehaviour, the Class Teacher, the Principal, other relevant staff members (e.g. Teaching Support staff) and the child's parents/guardians will work together to ensure that the child's behaviour meets the standards of our school. This may involve an agreed set of sanctions (e.g. withdrawal of privileges, withdrawal from a particular peer group or activity). Equally, this process may lead to the identification of a particular need for learning or therapeutic support on the child's part.

In cases where a child has failed to respond to an ongoing effort to support a change in behaviour, the school may consider suspension or, in the most serious cases, expulsion. The procedures and regulatory framework governing these sanctions are described separately in this policy.

Serious misbehaviour includes the following:

- Verbal abuse of any member of the school community;
- Serious disruption of the teaching and learning process;

- Aggressive, threatening, racist, or violent behaviour;
- Behaviour that poses a threat to safety;
- Theft or damage to property;
- Intimidation or extortion;
- Bullying behaviour, either physical, verbal/non-verbal or in written form (including all forms of technology).

Yard – Rewards and Sanctions

Basic Rules

- Talk to a staff member on yard duty if there is a problem
- Play safely and fairly
- Fighting, name calling or bad language is not allowed
- Children are not allowed to leave the yard without permission
- Continuously interrupting another class's football time may result in that individual missing their own football session
- A red flag means that it is currently too dangerous to play on the grass.

Rewards

Classes and /or individual children will be rewarded for good behaviour. Different reward systems are in place in the school and in individual classes. Sanctions for poor behaviour on the yard begin with the “gentle reminder”. They move on progressively then to a “warning”, and some timeout [3 minutes at the side for juniors and 5 minutes at the side for the seniors]. If a child continued to further behave poorly, a further 5 minutes at the side would be considered/sanctioned. Further incidents of inappropriate would see the principal and the child's parents becoming involved.

Behaviour in Halls and Corridors

For their own safety and in the interests of good order, children are asked to “Walk, not Run”, and to “Walk on the Right” [of the corridor and the stairs].

Code of Good Behaviour: Suspension and Expulsion

1. Introduction

Suspension and expulsion are the most severe sanctions that the school can impose on a pupil. This section of the Code of Behaviour gives details of why these sanctions may be imposed, and the procedure that must be followed.

2. Suspension

2.1 Who imposes a suspension?

In different circumstances, a suspension can be imposed by the Principal, the Chairperson of the Board of Management (Chairperson) or the Board of Management (BOM). A class teacher cannot impose a suspension on a student. In particular:

- The Board of Management has authorised the Principal and/or the Chairperson to suspend a student from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days;
- Suspensions of more than three days can only be imposed by the Board of Management.

2.2 Grounds for suspension

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a child or a member of staff will be regarded as gross or serious misbehaviour. Grounds for suspension include the following:

- the student's behaviour has had seriously detrimental effect on the education of students;
- the student's continued presence in the school at the time in question constitutes a threat to safety;
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Suspension is imposed as a means to an end – principally, ensuring that the student in question adheres to the school's behavioural standards and that their behaviour is not a problem for other members of the school community. In normal circumstances, other measures will be used as a way of achieving the required standard of behaviour before a suspension is imposed.

However, a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. The Principal/Chairperson/BOM must be satisfied that any suspension imposed respects these points.

2.3 Procedures for imposing suspension

When a suspension is being considered, both children and parents will be

- informed about the relevant complaint and
- given the opportunity to respond to the complaint.

Thus parents have the right to come to the school and will be invited to do so in order to discuss the complaint with the Principal and/or the class teacher. In some circumstances, this may involve a meeting with the Chair or the BOM.

Different procedures apply in relation to **immediate suspensions**. For reasons of safety or other serious concerns, and following a preliminary investigation, the Principal may impose an immediate suspension. The parents of the child be contacted to arrange for her or his collection. A complete investigation will follow immediately, and the issue will be discussed with the child and her/his parents as per the previous paragraph.

2.4 Fair procedures

Fair procedures will be followed. This means that children and their parents have the **right to be heard**, and the **right to impartiality**. The **right to be heard** means:

- the right to know details of the allegation and investigation, what it is about and how it will be decided;
- the right to respond, to be heard, to ask questions and to present their own point of view.

The **right to impartiality** means:

- the right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker;
- the right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making.

2.5 Implementing a suspension

If having completed an investigation in line with the procedures described above the Principal/Chairperson/BOM considers that a suspension should be imposed, the following procedures will be followed.

The Principal shall notify Parents/Guardians, in writing, of the decision to suspend. This letter will include:

- A statement of the period of suspension – beginning and end dates;
- reasons for suspension;
- information on the programme of study to be followed by the student during the period of suspension;
- arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by the student and parents that attach to this;
- provision for an appeal to the Board of Management, where appropriate;
- provision for appeal to the patron body;
- provision for an appeal to the Secretary General of the DES (Education Act 1998, Section 29).
- provision for an appeal to Ombudsman

2.6 Period of suspension

A suspension is not normally imposed for a period of more than ten days. As noted above, the Principal and/or Chairperson may suspend a student for up to three days. Periods of

suspension of longer duration will normally be discussed by the BOM: the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, is authorised to impose a suspension of up to five days in exceptional circumstances where a meeting of the BOM cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

The duration of a period of suspension should reflect the reasons that the suspension is being imposed.

A suspension may be lifted by the Board of Management, or if the Secretary General of the DES directs that it be lifted on foot of a Section 29 appeal.

2.7 Return to school

Following suspension, a plan to re-integrate the student will include an arrangement for a member (or members) of staff to provide support during the re-integration process. This will include catching up on academic work, behavioural issues and pastoral care issues. When considered appropriate, student contracts will be put in place for the student and her/his parents. This will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and parents. All efforts will be made to support the student to adhere to this contract. It will be expected that the parents will likewise provide and maintain support at all times for their child.

It is important to note that while a record of a suspension is kept, a student who has completed a period of suspension is given the opportunity to make a fresh start in terms of their behaviour. The student must adhere to the same behavioural standards as all other students.

2.8 Appeals

When a suspension is imposed by the Principal, the parents of the student suspended may appeal this decision to the Board of Management. Likewise, when a suspension is imposed by the BOM, parents may appeal this to the patron body. If the number of days for which a student is suspended reaches 20 in a given school year, the students' parents may appeal the latest suspension (i.e. the suspension which caused the total days on suspension to reach 20) to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 2008.

In all cases, the school will inform parents of the procedures to be followed to make such an appeal.

2.9 Records and reporting

In the case of suspensions imposed by the Principal and/or Chairperson, the Board of Management must be informed immediately of the suspension. This report should include details of the reason for the suspension and its duration

Where a student is suspended for six days or more, the Principal must report the suspension to an Education Welfare Officer or the National Educational Welfare Board.

Formal written records will be kept of the investigation and decision-making process relating to any suspension. This includes

- the investigation (including any notes of all interviews held);

- the decision-making process;
- the decision and the rationale for the decision;
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension;
- copies of all correspondence relating to the suspension

Parents have the right to access any such information that relates directly to their child.

3. Expulsion

3.1 Authority to expel

Expulsion refers to the permanent exclusion of a child from the school. The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student, subject to Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This authority will not be delegated to any individual or sub-committee of the Board.

3.2 Grounds for expulsion

The Board of Management will only consider expelling a child from the school when:

- a prior meeting has been held with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change his/her negative behaviour;
- ensuring the student understands the consequences, including the possibility of expulsion of his/her negative behaviour, should it continue;
- seeking the assistance of the appropriate agencies

As the most serious sanction the school can impose, expulsion is considered only in extreme cases and when all other options have been exhausted. Grounds for expulsion may include the following:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- the student's presence constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property

The degree of seriousness of the negative behaviour will be a key factor in deciding if expulsion is warranted

The school recognises that expulsion may be an appropriate course of action for a once-off incident or a first offence of the most extreme gravity. Included here are

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff;
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school;
- sexual assault.

3.3 Appropriateness of expulsion: considerations before imposing expulsion

The Board of Management will give thorough consideration to the following issues before a decision to expel a child is made:

- the nature and seriousness of the negative behaviour;
- the context and impact of the behaviour;
- the interventions tried to date;
- the appropriateness of expulsion as a response;
- the possible impact of expulsion
-

3.4 Procedures for expulsion

The procedures followed by the school in relation to expulsion are outlined below. These procedures will be enacted in a way that respects the principles of fair procedures described in section 2.4 above.

Step 1 – A fair and detailed investigation into the alleged misbehaviour is carried out under the direction of the Principal.

Parents and the child in question will be given every opportunity to respond to the relevant allegations. When expulsion is a possible outcome of an investigation, it is essential for parents to meet the Principal to discuss the situation. Every effort will be made by the school to hold such a meeting. If parents persistently refuse to attend, the school may proceed with expulsion without this meeting having taken place.

Step 2 – A recommendation is made by the Principal to the Board of Management

When the Principal is of the view that expulsion is warranted, he/she will make this recommendation to the Board of Management at a formal hearing. The parents of the child and the Board will be furnished with copies of all relevant notes. The parents will be invited to the hearing, with sufficient notice given to allow them to prepare for the hearing. The parents will be informed of their right to make written and oral representations to the Board.

Step 3 – The Board of Management holds a hearing and considers the Principal’s recommendation

The Board must satisfy itself that a fair and thorough investigation has taken place. At the hearing, both the Principal and the parents of the child in question present their respective cases and are entitled to question one another’s statements. The Board must act and be seen to act with absolute impartiality during the course of the hearing. At the end of the hearing, the Principal and the parents must leave the meeting to allow the Board to reach its conclusions independently.

Step 4 – The Board reaches its decision and takes appropriate action

If the Board decides that the child should be expelled, the parents must be informed of this in writing. The Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education Welfare Act 2000, s24 (1)*). The expulsion may not be enacted before 20 days have elapsed from the date on which the EWO has been informed of the decision to expel. The parents will be informed that the EWO has been made aware of the decision to expel the child.

Step 5 – The School works with the Education Welfare Officer

Having received notification of the decision to expel, the EWO arranges to meet all parties concerned (the child and her/his parents, the Principal and the Board), individually and collectively (subject to the agreement of the parties concerned). These meetings are held to plan for the child’s continued education. The EWO may pursue the option of this education continuing in some form within the school, either in the short or long term.

Where the Board considers that this is not possible, the focus will be on other options. The Board may deem it appropriate to suspend the child in question while these consultations take place.

Step 6 – The decision to expel is confirmed

When the 20 day period following notification of the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, the Board fully confirms the decision to expel, and informs the parents of this decision, and that the expulsion will proceed immediately. The student and his/her parents are informed at this stage.

3.5 Appeals

Parents may appeal a decision to expel a child to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998). The National Educational Welfare Board may also bring an appeal on behalf of the child. This appeal is acted on by the Department as described in the relevant legislation.

Reviewing the policies

The policies described here will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management to ensure that they support the positive behaviour vision of the school, and that they are being applied in an appropriate manner. This review will take place in the first Board of Management meeting of the last term of the school year.

Signed: Gráinne Mc Cormack
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 4th October, 2017

Signed: Thérèse Gamble
Principal

Date: 4th October, 2017