



**Letterkenny  
Educate Together**  
National School  
ag fás le chéile - ag foghlaim le chéile

# **Letterkenny Educate Together National School**

## **Positive Behaviour Policy**

## **Rationale**

### **Practice in school**

In line with best practice it is necessary to review our policies in relation to behaviour management regularly and consult to agree an updated Positive Behaviour Policy (PBP)

### **Legal requirement**

It is a requirement under section 23 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 that the Board of Management must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students, parents and teachers. The act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). *It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*

- A. standards of behaviour*
- B. measures taken when a student fails/refuses to observe standards*
- C. Suspension /expulsion procedures*
- D. grounds for removing a suspension*
- E. procedures in relation to a child's absence*

### **Drafting of policy**

Subcommittee made up of parents and staff met throughout the school year 2013-2014 to review the policy. While in draft all parents/guardians and staff were invited to comment on the policy before it was brought to Board of Management for ratification.

The most recent review of the Positive Behaviour Policy was undertaken during the school year 2015/2016. Again all members of the school community were invited to participate. Advice was also obtained from outside agencies as appropriate.

Date	Action
School Year 2009/2010	Policy created
School Year 2013/2014	Policy reviewed and updated
School Year 2015/2016	Policy reviewed and updated

## **Relationship to Ethos of the School**

### **Democratic**

- Our school recognises that, in line with our ethos, parents/guardians and staff work in partnership to meet legitimate expectations with regard to positive behaviour and discipline.
- All member of our school community: Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents are invited to participate in the drafting and review of this policy.
- Roles and responsibilities for implementation of the policy are assigned to all members of the school community.
- In keeping with our democratic principle this policy emphasises active participation.
- Using Restorative Practice as a model allows each voice to be heard and encourages all parents, staff and children to show respect and engage in discussion even in times of disagreement.

### **Child Centred**

- A school is a collective organisation that strives to address the needs of every single child.
- School rules are there for the health, safety and welfare of each and every child.
- Each child has the right to learn, grow and thrive in a non-judgemental harmonious atmosphere, where they are treated with respect and dignity. This policy will therefore take a positive approach to the question of behaviour placing greater emphasis on rewards than sanctions.

- All decisions will be based on the educational, developmental, social and emotional needs of the children over and above other external factors.
- There is an on-going commitment to make sure children are aware of and understand the behaviour policy, are assured of its fairness and that their voice will be heard.

### **Equality Based**

- Based on the common ground of ethical values not specifically associated with any particular system of belief (religious, spiritual, ethical etc.)
- Recognition of cultural differences which may result in the need to take into consideration factors affecting behavior when implementing the policy
- Respect, acceptance and understanding of different systems of belief and the common ground shared by all
- No discrimination/preference based on belief systems (religious, spiritual, ethical etc.)
- Teaching and learning linked to Learn Together curriculum to formally encourage positive behavior and respect

### **Co-educational**

- No discrimination/preference on the grounds of gender.
- Recognizing and respecting developmental differences without reinforcing gender related stereotypes
- Providing positive role models without reinforcing gender related stereotypes

### **Aims**

The school aims:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect through the entire school community
- To promote positive and responsible behaviour, recognising the differences between each other and the need to respect these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.
- To assist the whole school community in understanding the values underpinning the systems and procedures that form part of the code of positive behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure Transparency /fairness in the implementation of this policy
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

## 1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify "*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*".

- Each pupil is expected to use these values
  - respect for self and others
  - kindness and willingness to help others
  - courtesy and good manners
  - fairness
  - readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
  - forgiveness
  
- The standards should describe the commitment that the school expects from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:
  - attending school regularly and punctually
  - doing one's best in class
  - taking responsibility for one's work
  - helping to create a safe, positive environment
  - respecting staff
  - respecting other students and their learning
  - participating in school activities.
- Attending school each school day is expected by law unless excused by illness or injury. In accordance with our Attendance policy.
  
- The rules are displayed in school and discussed in class using the child friendly language below
  - Come to School
  - Be Respectful
  - Do Your Best
  - Work Together
  - Be Safe
  
- Some behaviours are contradictory to this Positive Behaviour Policy, for example,
  - behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
  - behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
  - threats or physical hurt to another person
  - damage to property
  - theft
  
- There is recognition that OTHER factors affecting children may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated when implementing the Behaviour Policy i.e. cultural or SEN factors.
- Health & Safety concerns, in line with the schools Safety Statement, will also be taken into consideration.

As suggested under Section 23 (4) of the Education Act on enrolling in Letterkenny Educate Together NS the school will provide the parents of the child with a paper copy of the school's code of behaviour (on request) and inform parents that the policy is available on the school website. The principal may ask the parents/guardians to sign an agreement that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child. A child friendly version of this agreement is also signed by children from Senior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. During the school year Junior Infants are introduced to a pictorial agreement.

Early in the school year there will be a week that focuses on Positive Behaviour Policy including materials in child-friendly language. As part of this week, one night's homework may involve both parent/guardian and child reading and discussing the Policy.

## **2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

In Letterkenny Educate Together National School we recognise that positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships and the ways in which pupils, staff and parents/guardians treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school.

Board of Management, Principal, teachers, other school staff, parents and students have responsibilities at different levels for positive behaviour in the school.

A whole-school approach requires the school to provide opportunities and support for these groups to enable them to understand and live up to these responsibilities. This means, for example, that parents have opportunities to learn how their commitment to, and their relationship with, the school can impact on behaviour and learning. Students learn how their behaviour and learning, the learning of other students, and the wellbeing of staff, are linked together.

The elements of our whole school approach to behaviour include:

- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy
- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony
- A teamwork approach to behaviour
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- An inclusive and involved school community
- A listening school
- Restorative Practice approach

### **Modelling the standards: the responsibility of adults**

The adults in the school community have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their interactions both with students and with each other, since their example is a model of good working relationships and a powerful source of learning for students.

In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting students to behave according to these standards.

## Staff Roles and Responsibilities

### Roles

- Teaching, support and/or management roles as appropriate
- Staff- mentoring programme to make new staff members aware of the PBP
- Subcommittee member or as part of wider consultation
- To encourage positive working relationships with parents as partners in their children's education.

### Responsibilities

- Respect all members of the school community
- Deliver curriculum linked with PBP including SPHE and Learn Together especially to help children
  - To build relationships with staff
  - develop communication skills
  - develop appropriate ways of interacting and behaving
  - encourage forgiveness
  - develop resilience,
  - promote conflict resolution skills, to foster self-esteem
  - to help children accommodate differences
  - develop citizenship.
- Use a range of activities to develop these skills in children e.g. Circle Time, Toy Time, Golden Time, Assemblies, Golden Books, Workshops on relevant topics, Social Stories, Principal's Book, Social Skills Groups and discussions
- Having knowledge and understanding in agreeing to and implementing PBP through daily decisions and specified events/work
- Encourage children to do their best by positively reinforcing positive behaviour and to take responsibility for their work
- Deal with difficulties in line with Positive Behaviour Policy and Restorative Justice model
- Be cognisant of behavioural difficulties that arise from special educational needs of individuals.
- Use a range of strategies to work with children with behavioural difficulties e.g. IEP with behavioural targets, 1:1 support, team-approach, regular contact with parents, a supportive school community, an active and organised playground, modified reward systems for individual children, differentiated expectations.
- Agree behaviour targets and specific strategies if needed for individual children e.g. as part of an Individualised Education Plan
- Co-operate and communicate with parents through formal and informal meetings, workshops, written communication, information packs etc.
- Establish 2 way communication between staff and parents to discuss incidental behavioural issues.
- Inform and support parents about difficulties as and when they arise making sure that appropriate logs are kept when needed (Teachers' Professional judgement will decide when this is necessary)
  - *Golden Book* - carbon copy book with notes going home and copies can be read in class/assemblies
  - *Support from Home book* - carbon copy book central to school with standard info listed on front (name, date, incident, response by staff, sanction (if any) and please discuss at home)
- Access and review on an ongoing basis relevant policies and available resources
- Bring professional expertise to Positive Behaviour Policy
- Attend in-service about behavioural issues
- Pursue individual staff development in this area, if appropriate
- Use a team-approach and discuss concerns /strategies as agenda item during staff meetings
- Ask for support when necessary
- Alert principal of serious concerns or breaches to PBP
- Fulfil responsibilities within the specialised roles listed above, if appropriate
- Model Positive Behaviour with all members of the school community.
- Be an active listener.

All staff have a shared responsibility in operating the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. (Temporary staff, student teachers, coaches, etc. are expected to abide by the LETNS PBP).

### **Principal's Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Role**

- Manage staff
- Manage teaching and learning linked to PBP
- Liaise with parents including those of newly enrolled children
- Liaise with people on placement/substitute work
- Liaise with Board of Management on serious breaches of PBP

#### **Responsibilities**

- Implement PBP on daily basis
- Timetable and manage specific events detailed in PBP e.g. new parents' meeting
- Encourage and facilitate parent/staff meetings and other communication
- Make people in the school on placement/temporary staff aware of the Behaviour Policy
- Follow procedures for serious breaches of PBP
- Manage the Principal's Book
- Support staff and parents with issues on an individual/group basis
- Arrange inservice training when needed
- Encourage Positive Behaviour in pupils through daily reinforcement, assemblies, class projects etc.

### **Board of Management Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Roles**

- To manage the school in line with the PBP
- To ratify and review the policy on an annual basis ensuring staff, children, parents and Board of Management have a voice.

#### **Responsibilities**

- Support the principal in fair application of the PBP within the school
- Make decisions that are informed by and support PBP
- Support all staff in implementing the PBP e.g. provision of opportunities for staff development. more input for Restorative Justice model
- Ensure all parents are informed of and understand the PBP
- Ensure all pupils understand the PBP and to ratify a child-friendly version of the policy.
- Respond to parents with concerns/challenges around the PBP
- Follow procedures to deal with serious breaches of behaviour

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Parent Staff Association (PSA)**

### **Roles**

- Communicate policy to parents through notice board
- Arrange training/support for parents, if appropriate

### **Responsibilities**

- PSA manage a notice board with key statements from PBP that is changed regularly
- Liaise with the Board of Management on all actions
- Encourage parents to be aware of and understand the ethos and spirit of this policy

## **Parents/Guardians Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Roles**

All Parents/guardians have role within the school

- As parents/guardians of individual child(ren)

And may have a specialised role

- As participants in Parents in the Classroom Project
- As members of PBP and other Subcommittees
- As members of Parent Staff Association
- As members of Board of Management

### **Responsibilities**

- To read familiarise themselves with the positive behaviour policy by requesting a copy from the school office or via the school website.  
(Parents/guardians of newly enrolled Junior Infant children are informed about this policy at the new parents' meeting and provided with a copy.)
- To sign a parent/school agreement that she/he has read the PBP if requested.
- Co-operate and communicate with staff through formal and informal meetings, workshops, written communication, information packs etc.
- Encourage their children to uphold the school's ethos and PBP.
- Respect all members of the school community
- Make themselves aware of and co-operate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- Help their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed.
- Ensure their children have the necessary books and materials to complete their schoolwork and take part in school activities.
- Ask for support from the school when appropriate
- Discuss specific PBP homework and agreements with children
- Agree behaviour targets and specific strategies e.g. as part of an Individualised Education Plan.
- Share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school
- Contact the class teacher if they have concerns.



## Pupils' Roles and Responsibilities

### **Roles**

Pupils were involved in drafting the code of behaviour:

Drafted class rules

Review class rules, sanctions, rewards to date, feedback from student council

Launch week

Drafting summary document

Pupils play a role in the ongoing implementation e.g.

- Drafting rules, rewards and sanctions for the classroom
- Taking part in assemblies
- Working on Student Council
- Buddy systems
- Peer mediation
- Involved in reviews through Student Council
- Discussing Rights and Responsibilities under Learn Together
- Individual children may be consulted as part of part of their Individualised Education Plan

### **Responsibilities**

These are the standards expected by the school from each student:

Come to School

Be Respectful

Do Your Best

Work Together

Be Safe

## 3.Strategies for promoting positive behaviour

### **In Classrooms:**

In September:

- Teachers discuss 'High 5' Rules with the children in an age appropriate way.
- Teachers and pupils agree class rules using positive language and rewards with for that class
- Teachers teach and give homework linked to the PBP
- Classes participate in the Positive Behaviour Week and associated activities exploring how people should treat each other

Throughout the year:

- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour is in place.
- A stepped consequences system for not meeting behaviour standards is in place.
- Teachers implement a range of classroom management techniques that promote positive behaviour.
- Teachers use a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Teachers timetable activities in the classroom to maximise promotion of positive behaviour.
- Golden Time to be used in all classes

- Golden books written in by all staff
- Showing good work to other classes/principal
- Good behaviour/effort/work is communicated to parents/guardians
- Students are given responsibility in the class at a level appropriate for their age
- Students are given clear boundaries
- Students are helped to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- Students receive recognition and positive feedback about behaviour
- Students have opportunity for self-assessment

#### **In the school as a whole:**

- All staff members are proactive in communicating rules/expectations to children in all areas of the school.
- Positive behaviour by the children is acknowledged and praised verbally.
- Certificates for *Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine*, Handwriter of the Month etc. are given out at assemblies
- Celebration of achievement for each pupil at the end of September
- Celebration of school year at end of June and individual card for each pupil
- Principal's Book (names read out at assembly each Friday).
- Student council and class meetings
- Students are given responsibilities e.g. Green Team, Student Council
- are encouraged to see that the PBP works in a fair way to the benefit of all
- positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- have good school routines
- have good rules for trips
- visual reminders around the school : both pictorial and written

#### **During playtime:**

- Two/three teachers are on duty with SNAs supporting individual children.
- Concerns are discussed at staff meetings with necessary arrangements agreed and put in place.
- Moving from eating to playtime is organised (time & lining up) and supervised by teachers on duty.
- Class teachers collect class lines at the end of yard time.
- The Playground Safety Tips are displayed in the playground.
- Activities and games are timetabled and communicated to all pupils.
- The playground is zoned for specific groups/activities.
- Playground Helpers are appointed to encourage positive playground practices.
- Playground Helpers are responsible under the Supervising Teachers' guidance for equipment (Summer Term).
- Playground Helpers have regular meetings with lead teacher.
- Game of the Week is taught by class teachers and supported by teachers on duty (Summer Term).
- Children remain seated during wet play. Each class has a list of what is allowed. Play buddies help out in younger classes on a rota basis.

- Children ask to use the toilet. There are designated toilets for playtime.

## **Homework**

As set out in the homework policy

## **Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour**

*Letterkenny Educate Together NS places a greater emphasis on affirming positive behaviour than on sanctions.*

Systems for acknowledging positive behaviour must:

- be meaningful
- allow students to link rewards and behaviour that is valued and wanted
- include rewards for effort as well as achievement
- be inclusive
- be consistently and fairly applied
- encourage intrinsic motivation promoting love of learning
- not encourage unhelpful competition or become the goal of learning

**Rewards may be given on a school, class, group or individual basis and may include:**

- ✓ Praise & compliments (genuine)
- ✓ Opportunities to reflect on their achievements
- ✓ Display of work
- ✓ Golden Book
- ✓ Principal's book
- ✓ Showing work
- ✓ Trips
- ✓ Computer Time
- ✓ Golden Time
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ New equipment

## **Responding to inappropriate behaviour**

Inappropriate behaviour happens and can be disruptive. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress, anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers. Our policy is to intervene early and positively using the principles of Restorative Justice.

**Strategies used in response to incidents of inappropriate behaviour are:**

- Active listening to child
- Using the Restorative Justice process (judge behaviour rather than the pupil)
- reminding the pupil & opportunities for reflection on behaviour

- reasoning with the pupil
- reprimand, including advice on how to improve and a stepped consequence procedure used in class.

N.B. All classes operate a stepped consequence behaviour plan. This is done in an age appropriate way e.g. a traffic light system, with clear consequences which have been previously discussed with the class.

- "putting it right" e.g. clean table after marking it, carrying out a useful task, apologising
- giving a fresh start each day
- communication with parents/guardians, either verbal or written (standard information for behaviour book write-up)
- referral to class teacher
- Use of sanctions:
  - loss of privileges, e.g. loss of golden time
  - payback time
  - Time Out: withdrawal from part lesson or peer group (as part of the stepped consequence behaviour plan)
  - Work not meeting expectations may be given as extra homework
- referral to Principal
- suspension\*
- **expulsion**

The purpose of the above strategies is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is inappropriate in context
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Strategies should:

- defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair, consistent and transparent way
- be timely

Staff use agreed sanctions and teachers know the level of sanction they are authorised to apply.

Supervised time out may be appropriate in order to:

- ensure the learning of other students
- help the student to reflect on the impact and consequences of their behaviour
- ensure safety
- as a response to the following behaviour:

- Physically hurting another child (intentionally)
- Swearing
- Refusing to follow the instruction of a member of staff

During these times students will be supervised in another classroom or in a support room while they complete a required activity. A note will be sent home informing parents of any cases of a supervised time out. This note should be signed by parents and returned to the class teacher.

Consistently denying a student access to a particular part of the curriculum as a general sanction is not appropriate.

**There is staged process for dealing with persistent or more serious inappropriate behaviour:**

- Class/support teachers follow a stepped consequence approach giving warnings and/or advice.
- Class teachers (if not involved) may be informed by person who dealt with or observed behaviour.
- Parents/guardians are to be informed.
- The Principal is informed of more serious or persistent behaviour.
- The parents/guardians are required to attend a meeting.
- The Principal is informed of gross misdemeanours immediately
- Principal's may refer a case to the Board of Management

Teachers are mindful of the sensitivities of parents when meeting to discuss their child's behaviour. The Principal may also be present at meetings and the child may be included at some stage of the meeting.

**Students with Special Educational Needs**

The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs. A behaviour modification plan may be needed to help a student with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student. Teachers take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable and the purpose of any sanction.

**Bullying**

In Letterkenny Educate Together NS bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable. Teachers have a professional duty of care to address bullying and procedures in the Revised Anti-Bullying Policy 2013/2014 must be followed.

**Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

- Parents and teachers work together to help the student to modify behaviour and to work towards changing it. This will involve the Principal and other in-school supports.
- Children who display repeated emotional disturbance in school will be referred for psychological assessment with the consent of parent(s).
- Through the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO), appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, National Educational Psychological Service.

- The Principal and LETNS Special Education Teachers team may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour, if required.
- Teachers may avail of INTO seminars on managing challenging behaviour or in-service courses run by Institute of Child Education and Psychology, Education Centres, etc. and refer to publications.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, steps will be taken to distance the pupil from the immediate environment of other pupils and the Principal will be notified immediately.

## 5. Suspension / Expulsion procedures

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify... *'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned'* and *"the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student."*\*

### Suspension

The Principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when *a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.*\*\*

Circular 20/90 states that *'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated'*.

### Procedure employed in LETNS in relation to suspension and expulsion:

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

Grounds for suspension:

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

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

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening, or violent behaviour towards a member of staff will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal and or the Chairperson to exclude a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

Procedures that ensure fairness when excluding a pupil will include:

- Ensuring other means of intervention and dealing with the behaviour has been tried.
- Parents will have been invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude.
- A fair investigation will have taken place, taking both parents' and pupil's perspective into account.
- Parents and student will be informed about the complaint.
- Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond.
- Parents may be informed by phone or in writing.
- In the case of immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- The BOM, before reaching a decision to exclude a pupil, will ensure its decision will be reached in an unbiased manner. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.
- Following suspension, a plan to re-integrate the student will include, where possible, an arrangement for a member of staff to provide support during the re-integration process. Student contracts will if necessary be put in place for the student and his/her parents. This will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and parent/s. All efforts will be made to support the student to adhere to this contract. It will be expected that the parent/s will support and maintain support at all times for their child. Regular positive contact will be necessary until the student has re-settled.

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\* The Education Welfare Act, 2000 Sections 23(2) c, d

\*\* The Education Welfare Act, 2000 Sections 21(4) a

- When an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.
- LETNS suspension form will be filled in noting which parent/guardian collected student, what time student was collected, place and time of supervision and personnel supervising whilst waiting arrival of parents/guardians
- Parent/Guardian will sign LETNS suspension form.
- The Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- The National Education Welfare Board will be notified by phone, fax, or email and using the standard form\* if a student is suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days,

### **Implementing the suspension**

The Principal shall notify P/G in writing of the decision to suspend

- Letter stating period of suspension - dates it begins and ends
- Reasons for suspension
- Any programme to be followed by student and or parent
- Arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by student and parents
- Provision for an appeal to Board of management
- Right to appeal to the secretary General of the DES (Education Act 1998 section 29)

### **Expulsion (permanent exclusion)**

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5))

*The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice this should be reserved for the BOM and not delegated.*

### **Grounds for expulsion**

*Before a student is expelled:*

A meeting is held with parents and student to try to find ways of helping the student to change her/his behaviour.

- Ensuring the student understands the consequences of their behaviour should it continue.
- Ensuring all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies.

Serious grounds are:

- Student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.

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\* Forms are available on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)



- The student's presence constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The kinds of behaviour that might result in expulsion for first offence

- 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

## **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including:

- (1) permanent exclusion from a school and
- (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing by the Principal of the decision of the Board of Management to permanently exclude or suspend the student .

Parents/Guardians will be informed of their right of appeal, the associated timeframe of 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents and student.

Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02.

The Board of Management will prepare an appeal if the school is being investigated by the Dept of Education and Science.\*

## **6.Keeping records**

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, the school maintains records in relation to pupils' behaviour.

### **Class level**

- Copies of serious incident forms will be copied and kept a file. Copies may also be given to the Principal.
- A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.
- The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.\*
- Staff have a clear and consistent understanding of what constitutes excellent behaviour and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and discuss these matters regularly at staff meetings.
- The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour.
- Problematic behaviour will have been discussed with parents before noting/recording on the end of year report.

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\* Circular 20/90

## Playground

- Supervising teachers will use a yellow card/red card system and note names and dates of those children given red cards. A copy of these 'Red Card' notes will be sent home to be signed. Persistent or more serious behaviour will be written in the behaviour book with a note going home and will inform class teachers. Instances of repeated misbehaviour to the attention of the Principal through the behaviour book.
- Playground Safety (see Appendix) listed what is expected in the yard. These are discussed regularly with the children and amended following discussion by the whole staff at staff meetings, if necessary.

## School records.

- In cases referred to the principal class teacher records pertaining to that case will be photocopied and given to the Principal.
- Formal records are maintained by the Principal e.g. factual reports of particular incidents, communication between school and home, with outside agencies, Board of Management etc.
- The Principal also maintains documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29.

## 7. Procedures to be followed in relation to pupil absences from school

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the school of an impending absence.
- Parents/guardians send in a written note informing the school of the reason for their child's absence from school.
- Written notes are recorded on the school database. These notes are kept in the child's file in the office.
- Teachers record attendance on reports for mid-year and end-of-year reports.
- Concerns regarding absences are highlighted to parents by class teachers and/or the principal.
- Parents are sent letters when their child has been absent for 10 days or more.
- Parents are sent letters when their child has been absent for 20 days or more and are informed that this information has been provided to the National Education Welfare Board.
- LETNS uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board according to their reporting schedule.

## Our school encourages maximum school attendance by:

- Creating a stimulating and positive school environment
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Adapting, on occasion, the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- Having targets for improving attendance under the school DEIS plan
- Having the Board of Management monitors attendance on a yearly basis.
- Participating in the School Completions Programme

## **8. Reference to other policies/documents**

Other school policies that have a bearing on the Positive Behaviour Policy are:

- Learn Together Plan
- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Special Educational Needs
- Homework Policy

## **9 Success Criteria**

Practical indicators of the success of this policy are:

- Respect shown to all members of the school community
- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- Consistent implementation of the policy by all staff in the school
- Willingness among staff to discuss and modify the policy when needed
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Parents positively supporting PBP including sanctions

## **10 Implementation Date**

This policy will apply from the school year 2016/2017.

## **11 Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually ( or in line with a change in Department legislation) and amended if necessary.

## **12 Ratification & Communication**

Letterkenny Educate Together National School's Board of Management officially ratified this policy in June 2016

The full policy is available to all members of the school community via the school office or website.

## Appendix One: References

- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 Section 23(1 -5), 24 (1-5)
- Education Act, 1998 Section 15 (2(d))
- Circular 20/90 on Discipline (DES web site [www.irlgov.ie/educ](http://www.irlgov.ie/educ)). Also in CPSMA Handbook
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
  - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
  - (2) Suspension
  - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour (National Education Welfare Board) *Draft edition published for consultation in 2007*
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership. Phone: 053 23994

- *Working towards a Whole School Policy on Self-Esteem and Positive Behaviour.* Jenny Mosley. Positive Press 2001
- *Working Together - to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education*
- *Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide.* Patricia Dwyer. Marino