

Code of Behaviour for Headford Primary School

Headford Primary School

Church Road, Headford, Co. Galway

Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Code of Behaviour for Headford Primary School

Headford Primary School's Code of Behaviour is the result of the ongoing consultation and collaboration between the Principal, staff, parents, and Board of Management. It was developed in September 2024 and is in line with the "Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools", issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The code was drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents and in discussion with the Pupils. This will ensure a whole school approach to behaviour in our school.

In drawing up the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and the circumstances of the school and our pupils. The aim of the Code is to ensure that the individuality of each pupil is respected, while acknowledging the right of each pupil to education in a relatively disruption free and safe environment.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

This Code of Behaviour relates to the aims of the mission statement of Headford Primary School, to provide a safe, happy and friendly environment for all our pupils. The school operates on the basis of mutual respect and courtesy and believes that a positive school ethos is based on good relationships. This requires a high level of co-operation between staff, pupils and parents. It is the right of each child to receive education in a secure, non-bullying and relatively disruption-free environment.

The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions, in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.

All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. This should help reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.

Rules are kept to a minimum and stated positively where possible in terms of what pupils should do.

Each teacher has responsibility for the discipline within his/her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

The teacher on supervision in the lunch and play areas during break times will deal with problems that arise and may inform the relevant Class Teacher, or the Principal Teacher if necessary.

A pupil will be referred to the Principal Teacher for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

AIMS

To promote good behaviour in our school.

- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others

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- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner

Attendance

- When a child is absent, a written note explaining the reason for the child's absence must be given to the class teacher when the child returns to school. Parents should write a note to the child's teacher.
- Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end of term closures when planning family holidays. It is inadvisable for students to miss time out of the school term due to holidays.
- If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. In the event of a child missing 20 days from school, parents will be informed of this in writing. (See Attendance Strategy)

Content of Policy

1. Guidelines for behavior in our school

Standards of behaviour

The standards of behaviour set out:

- the expectations for pupils, staff and parents and how they will treat each other.
- the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning.

The adults in this school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour in their dealings both with the students and with each other, as their example is a powerful source of learning for students.

The standards of behaviour expected from all members of the school community are:

- respect for self and other
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

Standards which signal unacceptable behaviour include:

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- 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

The standards below describe the commitment the school expects from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:

- Attending school regularly and punctually
- Doing ones best in class
- Taking responsibility for ones work
- Keeping the rules
- Helping to create a safe, positive environment
- Respecting staff
- Respecting other students and their learning
- Participating in school activities
- Our school rules reflect these standards.

School Rules:

The school rules are based on:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for the environment

Respect for self

- Each pupil should try to develop a responsible attitude towards themselves and their property by:
- Being on time in the morning and after breaks
- Bringing a note to the class teachers to explain absences and lateness
- Respecting their health by being properly dressed for cold and wet weather, avoiding getting wet by playing in the wet or puddles
- Wearing school uniform and being clean and neat at all times
- Looking after their own belongings and books, musical instruments, football gear etc.
- Not climbing on walls, swings or gates
- Not being in possessions of items such as mobile phones, tippex, matches, lighters, knives, cigarettes, or any other item or substance which might be deemed unsuitable in primary school.
- Making an honest effort to do his/her work to the best of his/her ability. Doing homework where possible and presenting all work neatly.
- Being careful outside school when cars are parked in the morning and at home time.
- Not running inside the school rooms or corridors and being careful while running outside so as not to endanger others by knocking them over.

Respect for Others

Each pupil should recognise the rights of others i.e. fellow pupils, teachers, school workers and visitors to the school.

They are encouraged to do this by respecting:

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- Their right to do their work without interference
- The teacher's right to teach without constant interference
- Their property
- Their good name
- Their right to speak the truth.

To enable those rights to be enjoyed pupils will be required to:

- Be courteous towards each other, their teachers, school workers and visitors.
- Address others properly i.e. fellow pupils by their Christian names and others by title e.g. Fr., Mrs., Miss etc.
- Not to use bad language or nicknames
- Get into line in a quiet, orderly manner
- Obey the teachers' instructions in class regarding talking etc.
- Play games fairly and not to exclude anybody
- Avoid mocking or jeering others because of appearance, style or ability
- Not allow others to suffer because of their silence
- Be truthful and honest at all times

Respect for the environment

Pupils will, at all times, be expected to treat their school environment with the greatest care and respect.

School Property

- Pupils should wear gym shoes while in the Gymnasium.
- Coats, bags and lunch boxes should be stored properly
- There should be no writing on any walls, desks, etc.
- Pupils should respect computers, televisions, videos, cd players, sports equipment, soap, toilet rolls and flower pots.
- Pupils should avoid throwing litter and dispose of same in the correct litter bin for recycling purposes
- Pupils should leave desks and classrooms tidy each evening and place chairs on tabletops for cleaning purposes.
- Pupils should not climb on walls, trees, shed or swing on goalposts or crossbars.
- Never bring chewing gum to school
- Leave the school as we would like to find it.

Transport

Buses should be treated as part of the school environment and treated with equal respect when pupils are on tours or travelling to matches, going swimming, school tours etc.

Adjoining property

Adjoining properties should be treated with respect and not entered without permission and supervised by teacher or adult on supervision duty.

Children must have permission from a teacher to access the Headford Boys' School and grounds.

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The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school trips, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games.

Playground Rules:

The rules for the playground are:

- All pupils will leave class promptly
- No returning to class once outside
- Exit and enter building in a respectable manner
- No hopping of balls inside the school corridors
- Permission from adult on supervision before entering the school
- Keep ramp area clear
- Stay off grass when wet
- No running on banks/slopes
- No playing behind prefab
- No playing on steps
- No climbing/swinging on goalposts, prefab railings or bars of swing
- Coats must be worn on yard when instructed by class teacher
- Swing is only used by children from infants to second class
- Keep clear of gate from Boys' School yard
- Keep yard litter free
- Lunch may only be eaten on yard due to exceptional circumstances and with permission from teacher on yard duty
- Classes line up immediately once bell rings
- Senior Girls will escort their assigned classes from the play yard to the classrooms at the end of breaks

Wet Play

- Junior classes will be supervised in a classroom.
- Senior classes will be supervised in a classroom or the gymnasium.
- Senior pupils (volunteers) assist in the classes during wet play.

Classroom Rules

Each class teacher is responsible during the month of September for drawing up a list of class rules with his/her class, which reflect the class/school rules, involve the students in the decision making and are taught to the class together with the Code of Behaviour.

P.E.Gym Hall Rules

- General Class Rules apply in the gym
- Suitable footwear must be worn in the gym hall
- Children must remove all jewellery before the P.E lessons begins
- No food or drinks to be consumed in the gym without teacher permission

Students with special educational needs

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Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's 'Code of Behaviour' but teachers will use their professional judgment in relation to regularity and level of sanctions. While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of misdemeanors, they will also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties. Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child to improve his/her behaviour. This may involve working and co-operating with a Special Needs Assistant(SNA), if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.

2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

Promoting positive behaviour is the main aim of the code. An understanding of the factors that influence behaviour is fundamental to successfully implementing our code of behaviour. Learning, relationships and behaviour are inextricably linked. Good behaviour is an outcome of effective learning and good relationships, as well as an influence on how students learn.

The following strategies are used to promote good behaviour in our school:

- There are good relationships between teachers, parents and pupils and a happy school atmosphere.
- Good school and class routines are in operation. Core routines necessary for the smooth running of classroom learning are clearly established – e.g. entry to the classroom, settling down after break times, noise level for pair/group work. etc.
- Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children.
- Teachers use a classroom management plan to promote positive behaviour. This includes the class rules as mentioned above, the agreed reward system and the consequences that apply when a child fails to adhere to the rules.
- Parents are welcome in our school and staff may consult with them where necessary.
- Where appropriate and possible we acknowledge positive behaviour with a note in the homework journal, by praising children on their behaviour and by rewarding them.
- Teachers ensure that the class timetable is as varied as possible and present a balanced and interesting educational programme for the pupils.
- Teachers are punctual at all assembly times.
- Children are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur clear, consistent consequences.
- SPHE is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem and respect and care for others
- Agreed yard rules are in place for the playground which are understood by all. Supervision arrangements are in place, including arrangements for wet days, pupils using the toilets and pupils who become ill or injured.

Approaches to Rewards and Praise

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Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results. Our approach to rewards and praise include the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- Stickers, smiley faces, ink-stamps and/or stars on pupils work
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- Awards at Assembly for good/improved behaviour. Pupil of the Week/Term/Year, Class of the Week/Term/Year.
- Tickets given for good behaviour and counted termly. Winners have a 'treat day'.
- Informing parents – written/verbal communication. This could include a note in the pupil's homework journal or a note home.
- Points, treats or stickers are awarded to individuals/teams/class for good behaviour and effort put into school and homework;
- Extra privileges like extended computer time; extra story time; extended PE
- Special Class treats – golden-time; raffle; extra break/PE; watch a DVD; Homework passes;
- Positive comments to the principal.

3. Responding to inappropriate behaviour

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct.

The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed. The teaching staff of the school in consultation with the principal will decide what sanction is most appropriate to the behaviour that has occurred.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers or misbehaviour in class

Running in the hallways

Disturbing the work or play of others

Disrespectful language, tone, or manner

Ignoring staff requests

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others

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- Referral to Principal
- Prescribing additional work/Reflection
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.)

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- Meeting with parents/guardians
- In school supervised detention
- Loss of privileges
- Removal to another classroom for time out
- Implementation of Behaviour Management Plan
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention

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- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- Referral to Board of Management
- Suspension from school for one to five days:

This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- Suspension from school for five to ten days:

This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

- Expulsion:

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

Procedures for Suspension:

The Board of Management and Staff of Scoil Mhuire na Dea Chomhairle will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 – 12).

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person (p73). Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in gross misbehaviour (see above).

The Board of Management will also take note of the factors to consider before suspending a student (p.72) and the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student (p82).

In relation to suspension:

- Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.
- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p73). The parents/guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
- Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians
- A suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective. The letter will confirm:
 - ✓ the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
 - ✓ the reasons for the suspension
 - ✓ any programme of study to be followed
 - ✓ the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
 - ✓ the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
 - ✓ the right to appeal to the Secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29).
- The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB 'Student Absence Report Form' (when applicable).
- When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the chairperson of the Board of Management.
- If a pupil continues to misbehave s/he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents/guardians to address the issues.
- As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.

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- Section 29 Appeal – when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

4. Expulsions:

PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION – The procedures outlined on pages 83 – 86 of the guidelines will be followed (see steps 1-6 below):

- Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence - see p. 81. Automatic expulsion will apply in the event that
 - ❖ The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
 - ❖ The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
 - ❖ The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
 - Step 1 – A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
 - Step 2 – A recommendation to the Board of Management
 - Step 3 – Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
 - Step 4 – Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
 - Step 5 – Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
 - Step 6 – Confirmation of the decision to expel
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- A record will be kept in the school of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils.
 - Breaches of behaviour will be recorded in writing by the class teacher and if necessary by the Principal
 - Other relevant school policies (eg. Health & Safety) will be referred to as appropriate.
 - The school's Anti Bullying Policy is attached to this policy.

5. Keeping Records

- A standardized record system is developed within the school which will be kept in any incidents of serious misbehaviour by a student. Incidents will be recorded in an Accident/Incident Book which is kept in the Secretary's Office. A record system has also been established for recording incidents on the playground. All records in relation to suspension and expulsion will be carefully recorded and reported. All interventions aimed at helping the student deal with inappropriate behaviour will be recorded including use of sanctions. Records will be kept in accordance with the data protection act and the schools policy on records keeping.
- Implementing the code

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- **Communicating the code**

All parents will be provided with a copy of the code of behaviour before registration of the child as the student of the school. The parents must confirm in writing that the code is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance of the code by their child. The expectations of the code will be communicated to parents at a parent information evening.

- **Teaching students the behavioural and learning skills they need**

During the month of September at the beginning of each school year the children will be taught the behaviours that are expected from them. This will be done at each class level.

- **Securing parental support for the code**

Parental understanding and support for the code will be strengthened through: Encouraging parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school, alerting parents at an early stage to concerns about a student's behaviour, clear channels of communication open to parents and information offered to parent's such as talks or workshops on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development.

Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from the whole school community
- Observations of behaviour in the class, yard, toilets and corridors.
- Happy and caring school atmosphere
- The number of recordings in the Incident book

Roles and Responsibility:

A. Principal, Deputy Principal and Staff

- To co-ordinate, monitor and the implementation of the policy and in partnership with teachers.
- To model positive behaviour
- To manage the classroom in such a way that children are positively engaged.
- To involve the pupils in drawing up rules for class-room.
- To teach the school rules in a way that is appropriate to each class level.
- To display rules in classroom.

B. Ancillary Staff operating under the guidance of the Principal and Deputy Principal.

- To model positive behaviour
- To co-operate with principal teachers in the implementation of the code.

C. Parents/Guardians

- To encourage their children to keep the school rules

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- To co-operate with the school in the implementation of this and other policies.
- To model positive behaviour

Implementation Date: September 2024

Timetable for Review: June 2025

Communication:

- Circulated to all staff including ancillary staff
- Circulated to all parents/guardians
- Published on school website

Ratification

This plan has been ratified by the School Manager of Headford Primary School.

Signed: R. GOWE-ORR

(School Manager)

Date: 09-10-24