

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

2014

St. Catherine's Special School

The Student Code of Behaviour is informed by our school's characteristic spirit and ethos. Therefore it is appropriate to include our school ethos statement as part of this document.

Mission Statement

St. Catherine's Special School, under the patronage of St. Catherine's Association Ltd, will deliver a service of excellence that is student centred, responding to their identified needs, ensuring that each achieves their full potential and is supportive of both students and their families.

The Student Code of Behaviour must be read in conjunction with other relevant policies, in particular, the Student Anti-Bullying Policy, the Student Digital Acceptable Use Policy, the Child Protection Policy and Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Complaints Procedure.

AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the individuality of each student is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each student to education in a relatively disruption free environment. Staff adopt a positive approach to behaviour using positive techniques of motivation and encouragement.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

The Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2012 underpin and guide school policy. We value all our students and families equally.

PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOUR

In St. Catherine's Special School we adopt a positive approach to behaviour. We recognise

- that students need to be acknowledged and affirmed, encouraged and empowered
- that differences exist between students in abilities, backgrounds and discipline within the home and we aim to tolerate these. Consideration is also given to behaviour due to temporary emotional stress or emotional difficulties
- the link between high standards of behaviour and high levels of inter-staff co-operation, parent/guardian-staff co-operation and student-staff co-operation
- the role of parents/guardians in the operation of an effective Code of Behaviour. Parents/guardians are invited to keep in close contact with the school regarding all aspects of their child's progress and are encouraged to communicate their concerns or any situation within the student's life which may bring about a change in their behaviour.

A copy of this Student Code of Behaviour is given to each new family. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss the School Rules with their children.

Every effort will be made to implement the Student Code of Behaviour in a manner that is fair and consistent to all.

SCHOOL RULES

School Rules are discussed with the students and written up in a way that is understood by each student.

- **Opening hours**
School opening hours are 9.15am. – 2.55pm.
Class time: 9.15am – 2.30pm. and assembly time ---- .
Students are expected to arrive and leave punctually
- **Learning**
 - Work to the best of your ability
 - Come prepared
 - Be on time
 - Be neat and tidy and wear your school uniform
 - Listen carefully
 - Co-operate with and respond to teachers and other staff members
 - Help to tidy up
 - Be a good student
- **Interaction**
 - Care for others
 - Encourage others
 - Treat everyone with respect
 - Use kind words
 - Use hands and feet nicely
 - Think before acting
 - Be quick to forgive
 - Share
 - Take turns
 - Wait your turn
 - Play nicely
 - Be a good friend
 - Be happy
- **Safety**
 - Walk when in school building
 - Take care around parked cars and buses at all times
 - When using digital technology use it safely
(as per Student Digital Technology – Acceptable Usage Policy)

Attendance

Parents/guardians are expected to phone the school secretary if their child is absent from school. Following an absence the parent/guardian must notify the school of the absence on the Reason for Absence form (see Appendix 1 for explanatory letter and copy of form). This form is to be given to the class teacher on the student's return. In the event of a student being absent for over three days without communication from the parent/guardian the Principal will be in contact with the parents to discuss the absence. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21 the Principal is obliged to notify Tusla when a child has been absent for a total of 20 days within a school year or is not attending school regularly. If a child is sick or is absent for other good

reasons the form must still be completed. The following strategies aim to foster an appreciation of learning and encourage regular attendance

- Students are taught in a positive environment and are rewarded for their efforts
- Families are encouraged to communicate through communication copies, homework journals and formal and informal parent / teacher meetings
- Links are established with schools / bodies in the area which provide link programmes, shared placement programmes, cultural and sporting activities that are appropriate for our students
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are written plans specifying learning goals that are to be achieved by a student over a period of time

STRATEGIES TO AFFIRM DESIRABLE / APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

When affirming desirable / appropriate behaviour the following factors are taken into consideration:

- the individual strengths and needs of each student
- the students' stage of intellectual development
- the students' age, maturity, physical, social and emotional development
- individual learning styles

Students are rewarded for effort, good work, good interaction, appropriate behaviour. Every student gets regular affirmation. Rewards given must be meaningful to the student.

Affirmation takes many forms

- A smile, clap, a word of recognition or praise or a written comment
- Stickers, certificates, stars, stamps
- Student of the week
- Display of work
- Class treats
- Public acknowledgement
- Verbal praise and encouragement
- Prizes / Lucky dip
- Being given special responsibilities or privileges
- Special praise from Principal, other teacher or other adult
- Positive behaviours and participation in school communicated to parents
- Rewards
- Reinforcers
- Points recorded on, for example, chart / snake / ladder / blackboard
- Awards or Certificates at Assembly
- Student being given opportunity to choose what activity they would like to do for a short period of time

We recognise that the reward's value depends not so much on what is given but how it is given.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT / DE-ESCALATE UNDESIRABLE / INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

When deciding which strategies to employ the following factors are taken into consideration:

- the individual strengths and needs of each student
- the students' stage of intellectual development
- the students' age, maturity, physical, social and emotional development
- individual learning styles

Rewards and reinforcement systems used must be meaningful to the student.

To promote positive behaviour we

- Provide students with a means to communicate
- Encourage
- Provide clear rules and expectations
- Use positive phrases
- Adopt consistent approach, staff working as a team
- Be aware of objects / triggers and remove them
- Show awareness of the effect of own behaviour, body language, verbal communication style
- Be aware of environmental effects and alter as necessary
- Be aware of student's physiological needs
- Adopt calm response in difficult situations
- Give student time
- Use visual timetable when appropriate
- Communicate regularly with parents
- Ignore if safe to do so
- Redirect
- Distract
- Provide appropriate standard of work
- Provide structured timetable and routine
- Give a sense of purpose – responsibilities – classroom jobs
- Use reinforcement system, for example, token economy
- Motivate by introducing things we know the student responds positively to
- Remove student / other students from situation
- Listen
- Talk through behaviour with student
- Include student in classroom activities while removing verbal / other reinforcement
- Redirect student from reinforcing situation to where student can see and hear the activity but not participate
- Redirect student from reinforcing situation to where student cannot observe ongoing activity
- Honour student requests for time away / to work away from others
- Give student space and time to calm / self-regulate
- Have class discussion about behaviour without singling out any particular student's behaviour
- Make school fun
- Teach the difference between 'telling tales' and responsible telling
- Teach about expression of feelings and emotions

- Teach social skills, guided by the student's needs and by the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum guidelines

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH RECURRING INCIDENTS OF UNDESIRABLE / INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Individual students may have Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) devised for them which must be followed precisely. All strategies and updates are to be entered on the Client Database.

Behaviour due to temporary emotional stress or emotional difficulties

Unprecedented / specific events may temporarily affect behaviour and no further action may be required, for example, events linked to ill-health, changes of medication or unusual home circumstances.

When recurring incidents of undesirable / inappropriate behaviour occur these are discussed with the parent/guardian by the class teacher as they may be able to provide relevant information as to the cause of the behaviours or may offer advice regarding strategies they use successfully.

Some Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) forms (see Appendix 2) are completed by the class team. A class team meeting is held. Incidents are discussed with a view to identifying the cause of the behaviours. At the class team meeting strategies for dealing with the behaviours are decided on. Strategies must be in line with challenging behaviour training approved by St. Catherine's Special School Board of Management. A class team plan 'Behaviour Strategies for --- devised by Class Team' outlining the suggested strategies and review date is drawn up. The class teacher discusses and agrees the strategies with the Principal. Parents are informed. A procedure for informing parents/guardians of recurring incidents is agreed with them as part of the class team plan. They may be informed by telephone call, in person or through the homework journal or communication copy. Notes written by the teacher in the homework journal must be signed by the parent/guardian to show they have received them.

In the case that undesirable / inappropriate behaviours continue to occur and are considered serious the Principal or the class team, through the Principal, may request that the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) team become involved with the student and the procedures as outlined below are followed.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

When challenging behaviour (see Appendix 3) occurs the teacher informs the Principal. The Principal attends a class team meeting. The Principal may delegate the Deputy Principal to attend and in the event that the Principal is unavailable the Deputy Principal acts up. This initial meeting is to clarify events and support staff.

At this meeting-

- An Interim Plan is drawn up. The Interim Plan is a temporary plan to be in effect in the time between the initial referral for challenging behaviour and the implementation of a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). Parties involved in drawing up the Interim Plan are the Principal, teacher, other staff essential to the process. The PBS team member may / may not be involved at this stage. This Interim Plan typically focuses on strategies to keep all parties as safe as possible. The class teacher or the Principal informs the parents.

A referral is made through the Principal to the PBS team. This referral is accompanied by the following completed documentation: a PBS referral form, a completed Harris Scales of Challenging Behaviours (Appendix 4), ABC forms and Scatterplots (Appendix 5), if deemed necessary.

On receiving a referral a PBS team member arranges to meet the teacher, the class team, parents/guardians, other staff essential to the process including the Principal. This process may involve several meetings.

- A timeline is drawn up for completion of assessment, a Functional Assessment (FA) or a Comprehensive Behavioural Assessment (CBA), and the scripting of a BSP. The PBS team member will decide which assessment is the most appropriate and parental consent is obtained.

A FA identifies factors that predict and maintain challenging behaviours. It produces these main outcomes: an operational definition of the challenging behaviour (operational definition = definition that is observable and measurable), identification of the broader setting events and more immediate antecedents that appear to increase the likelihood of the occurrence of the challenging behaviour, identification of the functions (consequences) of the challenging behaviour and hypotheses that pull all the information together into concise statements that can be used as a basis for developing a BSP.

The aim of a CBA is to compile a complete student profile in conjunction with: the multi-disciplinary team members who work with the student, the parents/guardians and the student, where applicable. (While each student presents with different needs the aim will be to complete these as soon as possible.)

A BSP is a multi-element plan based on the assessment. Each BSP should include, at a minimum, the following-

- Reactive Strategy
- Proactive Strategy
- Direct Intervention
- Skills teaching (replacement behaviour)
- Quality of life supports
- Environmental adaptations and supports
- Written records are kept at each stage of the procedure
- A procedure for consulting with and informing parents/guardians is agreed

Referrals for assessments decided as necessary will be forwarded to relevant managers requesting that they take priority.

When completed the BSP is discussed with the teacher and the Principal and signed off by the parent/guardian before implementation.

Upon implementation of the BSP, a Periodic Service Review, the key elements of the BSP in a checklist format, is completed on a daily or weekly basis.

The BSP is reviewed by the PBS team member and the class teacher on a regular basis. Decisions to change the BSP are informed primarily by how the student is responding. In addition feedback from all involved is considered. The Principal and parents/guardians are informed of any significant adjustments to the BSP. For example, removal of an intervention that has been previously agreed on, if it is removed due to not being effective for the student or not being implemented according to plan. It is not

deemed necessary to inform the Principal or parents/guardians of all minor adjustments that might occur.

Removal of Student/s

As part of a student's BSP it may be scripted that when certain behaviours occur they / or the other students and adults are to be removed to another room. The student's BSP will state precisely the procedure to be followed including duration and procedure for re-integration with peers. Staff is trained in the management of aggressive and potentially aggressive (MAPA) situations. The philosophy of MAPA is the safe management of emergency situations. MAPA's Crisis Development Model comprises: providing an empathic, non-judgemental approach to alleviate anxiety when there is a noticeable increase or change in behaviour, actively managing a potentially escalating situation, physical intervention which is the use of disengagement and / or holding skills to manage risk behaviour and minimise harm and which is used only in an emergency as a last resort when behaviour presents an imminent or immediate risk of harm to self or others, providing a therapeutic rapport and re-establishing communication.

Suspension

When the student's behaviour is a potential risk to themselves and others the Principal may in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, suspend a student. The procedures as set out by the National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB) in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools will be followed (see Appendix 6).

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- 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 challenging behaviour may be grounds for suspension.

Suspension may be necessary to allow time for the following:

- strategies to be decided on and included in the Interim Plan
- if necessary, changes to the physical environment
- to make the school environment a safer place for students and staff.

The suspension will:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents / guardians
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents / guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

Before suspending a student the following factors will be taken into account -

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date

- Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension
- Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

When the student is re-introduced to the school it may be on a phased basis.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. In the event that the Board of Management decide to expel a student the procedures as laid out in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24 will be followed (see Appendix 7).

Parents have the right to appeal permanent exclusion from a school under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 / DES Circular 22/02

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of challenging behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address the behaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- meeting with parents / guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- seeking the assistance of the relevant multi-disciplinary team members and relevant support agencies

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, a series of other interventions have been tried and it is believed that all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

Factors that will be considered before proposing to expel a student:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Students' Responsibilities**
 - To follow the school rules to the best of their ability

- **Teachers' Responsibilities**
 - To consult with parents
 - To discuss, explain and write up the School Rules in a way that is understood by the students
 - To make themselves aware of the Code of Behaviour and be guided by it
 - To create a safe, caring and positive classroom and school environment
 - To promote good learning practices
 - To be fair and approachable
 - To affirm work well done and good behaviour
 - To liaise with parents, other staff and students to devise behaviour strategies and plans
 - To inform the Principal of recurring incidents of student's behaviour
 - To inform parents of recurring incidents of student's behaviour as per the agreed procedure
 - To inform staff about the behaviour plans
 - To ensure that behaviour plans are implemented consistently by the class team
 - To maintain accurate records of behaviour
 - To report to the Principal

- **Special Needs Assistants' Responsibilities**
 - To make themselves aware of the Code of Behaviour and be guided by it
 - To create a safe, caring and positive classroom and school environment
 - To promote good practices
 - To be fair and approachable
 - To ensure that behaviour plans are implemented consistently
 - To report to the teacher

- **Principal's Responsibilities**
 - To make staff, students and parents aware of the Code of Behaviour
 - To ensure the safe and smooth running of the school
 - To mediate in times of difficulty
 - To be informed of students who may be experiencing difficulties and guide/support class team members
 - To inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management following an incident of challenging behaviour / when a student's behaviour is a potential risk to themselves and others.
 - To refer students to PBS team / person, liaise with the PBS team and ensure that procedures, as laid out, are followed

- **Parents' / Guardians' Responsibilities**
 - To discuss the Code of Behaviour with their child
 - To endeavour to have their child attend school and arrive on time
 - To notify the class teacher if their child is absent from school and return the Reason for Absence form
 - To endeavour to have their child comes to school prepared - with books and other requisites and also that homework is completed

To provide a note if homework is not completed
To liaise with teachers to the benefit of the child and to work to implement any agreed plan of action
To notify teachers of extenuating circumstances at home

- **The Board of Management's Responsibilities**

To support the Principal, staff and students

To ensure procedures are followed

Following an incident of challenging behaviour / when a student's behaviour is a potential risk to themselves and others the Chairperson will call a meeting of the Board of Management if deemed necessary by the Chairperson and the Principal. At this meeting a decision may be made to suspend the student.

When it is not possible for the Board of Management to assemble at immediate notice the Board of Management has empowered the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson with the right to suspend a student for up to three days.

This may be necessary to allow time for the following-

- crisis management strategies to be decided on and included in the Interim Crisis Plan
- if necessary, strategies to be implemented, for example, changes to the physical environment
- to make the school environment a safer place for students and staff

PROVISION FOR REVIEW

This policy will be constantly under review. Next formal review three years time.

Appendix 1

St. Catherine's Special School

Kilmullen Lane,
Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow A63 X985

Telephone: (01) 2819525

Fax: (01) 2810618

Website:

www.stcatherines.ie

e-mail: school@stcatherines.ie

Roll No. 19522L

Dear Parent / Guardian,

This letter is to inform you of the procedure to be followed if your child is absent from school.

On the first day of your child's absence please inform the school. Also, please inform the bus as usual. If your child will be late into school or is being collected early please inform the school.

If your child is absent from school please fill in an Absence form (see attached) for each period of absence and return it to the class teacher on your child's return. If your child is sick or absent for other good reasons the form must still be filled in.

Schools are obliged by law, under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to submit reports on school attendance to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency (www.tusla.ie) when:

- a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- a student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason
- a Principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- the Board of Management decides to expel a student.

If there is a concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given you may be visited by an Education Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you.

Kind Regards,

Teresa Smith
Principal

St. Catherine's Special School

Reason for Absence

Student's Name -----

Class -----

Date of Absence -----

Reason for Absence -----

Signature of Parent / Guardian -----

St. Catherine's Special School

Reason for Absence

Student's Name -----

Class -----

Date of Absence -----

Reason for Absence -----

Signature of Parent / Guardian -----

St. Catherine's Special School

Reason for Absence

Student's Name -----

Class -----

Date of Absence -----

Reason for Absence -----

Signature of Parent / Guardian -----

Appendix 2

SS- ABC chart

Student _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

Setting Events (e.g. sleep deprivation, feeling unwell, changes to routine /home, birthday ...) 	Setting (physical location, general activity, others in environment and their activity –general) 	Antecedent events (e.g.vocal antecedents /demands, physical contact from a peer etc. Discrete events immediately preceding the target behaviour) 	Behaviour Target behaviour (s) 	Consequences Events immediately after target behaviour, particularly responses of those in client’s immediate environment

Appendix 3

“The term challenging behaviour has been defined as ‘culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit use of, or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities’ (Emerson, 1995, 2001a) or as ‘behaviour ... of such an intensity, frequency or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion’ (Royal College of Psychiatrists et al., 2007)” (Emerson and Einfeld, 2011).

Emerson, E and Einfeld, S.L. (2011) *Challenging Behaviour*. 3rd Ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Challenging Behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Assaults/attempted assaults on others (includes pushing and grabbing)
- Hitting/kicking surfaces (walls, doors, tables, etc)
- Tantrums
- Inappropriate smelling
- Inappropriate body contact – with adult / peer
- Stealing food
- Absconding
- Property Destruction
- Self-injurious behaviours such as: self biting, self hitting, self pinching, pulling own hair
- PICA – ingesting non-edible items (dirt, wood chips, Velcro, plastic, etc)
- Inappropriate self-stimulatory behaviour: Rhythmic/non rhythmic contact of genitals with another surface or body part, directly or through clothing. Includes rubbing genitals against an object, person. Also included instances where student may touch another adult / peer in inappropriate area. Can include any time student lies with his face and body towards the floor and presses genital area repeatedly against the floor or any time he / she presses genital area against an object repeatedly (e.g. desk) in a standing or position

Challenging Behaviour also includes but is not limited to:

Non-compliance / protest behaviour – which can take more than one form

- Refusal / difficulty transitioning to other locations
- Transitioning between activities, to and from bus
- Vocal verbal refusals, for example, ‘No’, making inappropriate noises, aggression or kicking / pushing accompanied by inappropriate vocalisations, shouting at teacher/SNA/others when request made of them
- Dropping / flopping to floor/ground and refusing to comply with direction to stand
- Refusal to return to seat/desk when requested
- Refusal to engage in an instruction/activity

Challenging Behaviour and input from Positive Behaviour Support Dept. is not limited to these behaviours described above. Other behaviours that may be included are:

- Stereotypy – repetitive behaviours such as, rhythmic movements of the hands, bouncing or rocking of the body, tapping items/surfaces, chewing of clothes. A behaviour is defined as stereotypy when it fits the requisite form, which involves

repetition, rigidity, and invariance, as well as a tendency to be inappropriate in nature ([Turner, 1999](#))

- Vocal stereotypy – defined as any instance of non contextual or non functional speech and included singing, babbling, repetitive grunts, squeals, and phrases unrelated to the present situation. Examples include “ee, ee, ee, ee” outside the context of a vocal imitation task and laughter in the absence of a humorous event (Ahearn et al., 1987).

(source: St. Catherine’s Association PBS Referral document)

Appendix 4

Harris Scales of Challenging Behaviours

Name of person _____ Today's date _____

Person completing form _____

The following is a survey of the nature and extent of challenging behaviour. Please rate the frequency, severity and management difficulty of each of the 17 behaviours **during the last month**.

	Challenging Behaviour	Frequency Rating	Management Difficulty Rating	Severity Rating
1	Punching or slapping or pushing or kicking others			
2	Pinching or scratching others			
3	Biting or pulling hair			
4	Throwing things or using weapons			
5	Other behaviour injurious to others (<i>please specify</i>)			
6	Self injury			
7	Shouting or screaming			
8	Verbal abuse			
9	Withdrawn			
10	Stereotypical or ritualistic behaviour			
11	Damaging objects or property			
12	Soiling or wetting self			
13	Vomiting			
14	Threatening harm			
15	Stealing			
16	Exposing body inappropriately			
17	Other severe challenging behaviour (<i>please specify</i>)			

Frequency Rating		
1	<i>Never</i>	No knowledge of this behaviour ever occurring
2	<i>Not at present</i>	Has occurred, but not in the past month
3	<i>Occasionally</i>	One to four times in the past month
4	<i>Often</i>	More than four times in the past month
5	<i>Very often</i>	Daily or more often
6	<i>Extremely often</i>	Hourly or more often

Management Difficulty Rating		
1	<i>No problem</i>	I can usually manage this situation
2	<i>Slight problem</i>	I can manage this situation quite easily
3	<i>Moderate problem</i>	I find this situation quite difficult to manage, but I feel confident that I can
4	<i>Considerable problem</i>	I find this situation very difficult to manage on my own
5	<i>Extreme problem</i>	I simply cannot manage this situation without help

Severity Rating		
1	<i>No injury</i>	Did not appear to cause pain or tissue damage to other person in the past month
2	<i>Minor injury</i>	Caused superficial scratching or reddening of the other person's or own skin (e.g. light slaps/hits, gentle pushes, hair pulling without force). <i>First Aid or Medical Attention were not needed.</i>
3	<i>Moderate injury</i>	Caused moderate tissue damage to other person or self (e.g. bites/hits/kicks, breaking the skin or resulting in bruising). <i>First Aid attention was needed during the past month</i>
4	<i>Serious injury</i>	Caused serious tissue damage (e.g. cuts/wounds requiring stitching). <i>Immediate medical attention essential during the past month</i>
5	<i>Very serious injury</i>	Caused very serious tissue damage to other person/self (e.g. bones broken, deep lacerations/wounds). <i>Hospitalisations and/or certified absences from work necessary during the past month.</i>

Based on Harris, P., Humphreys, J. and Thomson, G. (1994) A Checklist of Challenging Behaviour: The Development of a Survey Instrument. *Mental Handicap Research* 7:2, 118-133.

Appendix 6

**Procedures in respect of Suspension
based on National Educational Welfare Board (2008) Developing a Code of
Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (p.74-78).**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms behaviour / was challenging behaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- inform the student and their parents / guardians about the complaint
- give parents / guardians and student an opportunity to respond.

Inform the student and parents / guardians

Let the student and their parents / guardians know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents / guardians may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents / guardians in writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having let them know. It also ensures that parents / guardians are clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents / guardians the seriousness with which the school views the **alleged** challenging behaviour.

Give an opportunity to respond

Parents / guardians and student will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

A meeting with the student and their parents / guardians provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of challenging behaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents / guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents / guardians how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents / guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The school will record the invitations made to parents / guardians and their response. Where parents / guardians do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, 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. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents / guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents / guardians.

Automatic suspension

Particular named challenging behaviours may be agreed by the Board of Management as cause for automatic suspension. These behaviours may differ from student to student and suspension would be scripted into their behaviour plan.

The period of suspension

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, the Board of Management may authorise 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, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

The Board of Management should normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

Appeals

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents / guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.

At the time when parents / guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Written notification

The Principal will notify the parents / guardians and student in writing of the decision to suspend. 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 study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents / guardians (for example, parents / guardians 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 letter will be clear and easy to understand. Particular care will be taken in communicating with parents / guardians who may have reading difficulties or whose first language is not the language of the school.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents / guardians about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The student will be re-integrated in a non-judgemental approach.

Records of investigation and decision-making

Formal written records will be kept of:

- the investigation (including 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.

Report to the Board of Management

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to NEWB

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Appendix 7

**Procedures in respect of expulsion
based on National Educational Welfare Board (2008) Developing a Code of
Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (p.83-86).**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms challenging behaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents / guardians due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

- inform the student and their parents / guardians about the details of the alleged challenging behaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- give parents / guardians and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of challenging behaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents / guardians should be informed in writing of the alleged challenging behaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents / guardians are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents / guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged challenging behaviour.

Parents / guardians and the student must have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of challenging behaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents / guardians is essential. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of challenging behaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents / guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents / guardians how best to address the student's behaviour.

If a student and their parents / guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the

challenging behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parents / guardians and their response.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged challenging behaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

- inform the parents / guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents / guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents / guardians
- notify the parents / guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents / guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents / guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing

It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents / guardians, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents / guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents / guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents / guardians are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)). The Board of Management will refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be

expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(1)).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*, s4A).

The Board will inform the parents / guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

Where expulsion is proposed, the parents / guardians will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents / guardians and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, section 24).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities.

In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management will take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task may be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents / guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents / guardians and the student will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent / guardian, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The appeals process

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (DES). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 4th of December 2014.

The Policy will be reviewed every two years.