



Knocknacarra Educate Together
National School

Code of Behaviour including Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to support the establishment of a caring, supportive and respectful learning community and to comply with legislation and Department of Education circulars.

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Introductory Statement:

This policy was formulated by staff members and is reviewed annually in consultation with pupils, parents and members of the Board of Management. It fulfils requirements to have a Code of Behaviour as well as address requirements regarding the development of an Anti-Bullying Policy as specified in *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Relationship to the Ethos of the School:

The ethos of Knocknacarra Educate Together can be defined as:

- **Equality-based** because all children have equal rights of access to the school and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds are equally respected;
- **Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities;
- **Child-centered** in its approach to education, with the individual needs of each child catered for and where Interaction between teachers and children is encouraged to help children to develop tolerance, creativity and self-confidence; and
- **Democratically run** with active participation by parents and pupils in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers.

This policy reflects the underlying philosophy and ethos that Knocknacarra Educate Together NS promotes the general welfare, health, development and safety of children in an environment where mutual respect and self-esteem are nurtured. It is the shared concerns and expectations of the children, parents, staff and management that create the unique character of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS.

This document also is linked to the rights of all children to have a safe, caring environment in which to learn and grow. It is grounded in a rights-based approach that acknowledges the rights granted to children through the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), particularly with reference to Articles 2, 3, 20 and 29. Ensuring children have a voice in setting out the behaviour expectations in the school, the Student Council, as part of our works towards becoming a UNICEF Child Rights School, reviewed the policy, particularly the one-page summary written in child-friendly language which can be found on page 6 of this document.

Rationale:

The Code of Behaviour is necessary and requires regular review for the following reasons:

- To ensure a positive climate for learning in the school and
- To fulfil the requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23 (2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:
 - A. the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
 - B. the measures that may be taken when a student fails/refuses to observe those standards;
 - C. the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned; and
 - D. the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.

Aims:

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS will endeavour to:

1. ensure the right of each child to education in a safe and relatively disruption-free environment;
2. ensure that all children will share an understanding of the high standard of behaviour which is expected in the school environment;
3. develop in the child, qualities of independence, self-reliance, tolerance and self-discipline;
4. develop pupils' self-esteem and promote positive behaviour;
5. facilitate the education and development of every child;
6. foster an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for one another and the environment;
7. promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever possible;
8. assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures in the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures; and
9. ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

1. Promoting Positive Behaviour

Whole-School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

In Knocknacarra Educate Together NS, we treat all children with respect and dignity. A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships which permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school. The overall responsibility for establishing this positive and affirming climate within the school rests with the principal and teachers. However, parents/guardians and pupils have essential roles to play as well. The heart of every discussion around behaviour is a careful consideration of what is best for the children of the school as individuals and as a learning community. Parents are asked to trust the teachers' and principal's professionalism. Likewise, teachers' interactions with pupils and parents will be respectful and will ensure lines of communication are always open.

Board of Management

The Board supports the Code of Behaviour by:

- Providing a comfortable, safe environment for staff and pupils.
- Supporting the principal and staff in implementing the Code. The Board provides opportunities for staff development by facilitating staff to attend relevant courses and organising in-school staff training.
- Discussing serious breaches of discipline, as required, at Board of Management meetings.
- Dealing with serious breaches of behaviour in collaboration with the staff
- Ratifying the Code once consultation/review is finished.

Principal

- Promotes a positive climate in the school.
- Ensures that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

- Arranges for review of the Code as required.

Staff

- Each teacher has responsibility for maintaining a positive and respectful climate within his/her own classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.
- New or temporary staff members are made aware of the Code at staff induction which takes place before a staff member starts work.
- Children who have special educational needs which include behavioural difficulties have specific targets included in their support plans.
- Class teachers, resource teachers and special needs assistants support the child with special educational needs or behavioural difficulties through promoting an understanding of expectations and teaching and role-modelling the expected behaviour.
- The SPHE and the Learn Together curricula are used throughout the school to support the Code of Behaviour. This helps pupils develop communication and conflict-resolution skills and appropriate ways of interacting and behaving. The SPHE programme fosters self-esteem and helps children accommodate differences and develop citizenship. Lessons on respect are taught from the justice perspective as lessons from the Learn Together curriculum guide children towards deeper moral thinking. The following strategies may be useful: circle time, assemblies, class discussions, seating arrangements, games and role play.

Staff members support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour by:

- creating a safe environment for each pupil;
- recognising and affirming good work;
- preparing school work and giving feedback regarding work done by pupils;
- recognising and providing for individual talents and differences among pupils;
- being courteous, consistent and fair;
- keeping opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum;
- dealing appropriately and consistently with misbehaviour;
- recording instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour;
- providing support for colleagues; and
- communicating with parents and providing reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils

Pupils play an essential part in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by:

- drafting rules for the classroom;
- taking part in assemblies; and
- following school, yard and class rules

Pupils are given a fair hearing and should always feel they may voice their concerns. It is viewed that conversations between pupils and staff provide opportunities for learning and development.

Parents/Guardians

Co-operation between staff and parents/guardians is encouraged through regular communication. This may include notes in school diaries, phone calls, informal conversations or arranged meetings.

Parents/guardians support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

- ensuring that children attend regularly and punctually;
- being interested in, supporting and encouraging their children’s learning and school experience;
- being familiar with the code of behaviour and supporting its implementation;
- co-operating with teachers in instances where their child’s behaviour is causing difficulties for others;
- communicating with the school in relation to any problems which may affect a child’s progress/behaviour;
- being aware of and co-operating with the school system of rewards and sanctions;
- attending meetings at the school, if requested;
- helping their child with homework and ensuring that it is completed; and
- encouraging children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others and for property.

Guidelines for Behaviour in School

Parents/guardians of newly enrolled children receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour. They are required to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child.

Standards of Behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school:

In order to help all children to develop the attitude and qualities which we believe to be important, it is necessary that we set outside limits for the children (school rules) to be followed by defined consequences (sanctions) when those limits are breached. It is our belief that with this knowledge and understanding of the limits, each child will feel stronger and more secure and will therefore be better able to realise his/her own individuality and potential. The degree of misdemeanours will be judged by the teachers and/or principal based on a common-sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

School rules are kept to a minimum and were devised and will be reviewed in consultation with the children of the school. The six simple rules are broad enough that they can guide discussions regarding specific situations. Pupils and teachers will collaborate in an on-going process to devise and maintain specific class rules each September as well as when required throughout the school year. The examples listed with each rule were identified by the children themselves. These examples are representative rather than an exhaustive list.

KETNS Rules

Look and listen

- Be attentive, using ears, eyes and brains, to teachers, classmates and guests in the school.
- Listen to everyone, with one voice speaking at a time.
- Raise your hand to give an answer in group situations to give everyone thinking time.
- Pay attention during lessons and activities.
- Use an indoor voice at all times while in the school and be quiet during certain activities so the classroom is a place where everyone can concentrate.

Be kind and caring

- Be kind when someone is hurt and help anyone in need.
- Say sorry, even when something happened accidentally.
- Include everyone in play.
- Be careful with words – use them for kindness.
- Use good manners and be polite.
- Be honest and truthful.
- Help tidy up.
- Kindly tell someone you don't like something they're doing and listen when being told this by someone else.
- Tell a teacher or adult whenever someone is not being treated kindly.
- Look after the forest, plants and biodiversity our school area.

Play safely

- Look where you are going when walking or running.
- Walk in lines in and out of the school and when on trips away from school.
- Always have gentle hands and feet and gentle voices.
- Use materials, equipment and toys correctly.
- Take great care of anything belonging to our classmates or our school community.
- Follow rules of a game and play fairly.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear suitable for the weather e.g. have a coat in winter.
- Sit properly and keep feet on the floor.
- Always ask a teacher before leaving the classroom or yard for any reason.
- Stay off the basketball/football pitch when a game is in play.

Share

- Share toys. Leave personal items at home unless they are being brought in for show and tell.
- Share materials and books.
- Share ideas – everyone gets a chance to give their opinion or to try something.
- Toys brought for afterschool should stay in your bag during schooltime.

Bring a healthy lunch to school

Complete every task, including homework, to the best of your ability

2. Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the guidelines issued by the Túsla (Child and Family Agency), the Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity,
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed

and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour. Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

The following is a list of examples of bullying behaviours. See Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* for additional information on types of bullying.

General behaviours which apply to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation through words, facial expressions or body language • Insulting or offensive gestures • Invasion of personal space
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls, text messages, email, communication on social networks, website comments, pictures or posts on any form of communication technology
Relational (manipulating relationships as a means of bullying)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone’s friends away • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • Intimidating facial expressions and body language
Identity-based behaviours concerning any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s perceived sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name-calling • Physical intimidation or attacks or threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special educational needs or disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling or taunting others because of their disability or learning needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues• Mimicking a person's disability• Setting others up for ridicule
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Relevant teachers for investigating bullying

All teachers can act as the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying, with the principal or deputy principal acting as a guide for the process.

Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- A positive school culture and climate is established through the cooperation between teachers, pupils, parents and staff.
- The use of the Learn Together Curriculum is an integral aspect of developing this climate. Its objectives in two strand units are of particular importance for ensuring the establishment of a positive, welcoming and safe learning environment. Moral and Spiritual Development considers core values and moral development in context. Equality and Justice addresses the rights and responsibilities of individuals as well as the importance of promoting equality as defined in the nine grounds for discrimination.
- In addition, the key principles of Educate Together influence the policies and procedures in the school through the form of the "hidden curriculum". This means child-centredness, robust gender equality, acceptance towards all and democratic principles are essential components of the school ethos. When these principles are applied, they support the establishment of a positive school culture that has the capacity to prevent bullying.
- The SPHE Curriculum also provides opportunities for addressing issues of fairness and kindness to prevent bullying behaviour. Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes are used.
- Children are encouraged to speak out when they witness any bullying behaviour. Staff take any concerns seriously.
- The staff model right behaviour through the maintenance of positive relationships among staff and with the pupils of the school.
- Bullying behaviour is approached from a school-wide perspective, with a consistent message that bullying behaviour is not tolerated. A culture of telling when such behaviour occurs is firmly established.

Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

(ii) In investigating and dealing with accusations of bullying, the teacher, in consultation with the principal, will decide how best the situation might be resolved.

- (iii) All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, inclusion support assistants (ISAs), bus escorts, caretakers and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a relevant teacher.
- (v) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including all pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- (viii) Incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- (ix) All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. It is advisable to have two members of staff present for any interviews whenever practical. Written records of all conversations should be kept, with the date and the time of the conversation noted.
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements.
- (xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to this Code of Behaviour). The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for pupils.
- (xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of this Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- (xvi) It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- (xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

(xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix E.

(xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased,
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable,
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal or Deputy Principal.

(xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

(xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix E to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) where it is determined, in serious cases, that the bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

(iv) In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix F must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix E does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Programme of support

The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying will be implemented and based on the ideas of Restorative Practice. While sanctions may be used as specified in Section C of this Code of Behaviour, the general focus of response to bullying behaviour is one of trying to mend and restore relationships as well as to encourage children to speak out when they experience bullying behaviour. The principal and relevant teacher will work together to ensure all parties engage in activities that promote the restoration of positive relationships. This may take the form of circle time or conversations facilitated by teachers. The purpose of any such activities will be to ensure each party understands the consequences of their actions for themselves and for the others. Other potential interventions are The Support Group Approach and Circle of Friends. A resource for identifying interventions is <http://www.antibullyingworks.co.uk/resources/intervention-strategies/>.

Traditional Approach	Restorative Approach
School rules are broken.	People and relationships are harmed.
Justice focuses on establishing guilt.	Justice identifies needs and responsibility.
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm
Justice directed at the offender; the victim is ignored.	Offender, victim, and school all have direct roles in the justice process.
Rules and intent outweigh whether outcome is positive or negative.	Offender is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm and working towards positive outcomes.
Limited opportunity for expressing remorse or making amends.	Opportunity given to make amends and express remorse.

In addition, teachers will collaborate to help children develop their self-esteem. A variety of methods will be used including written reflections, guided conversations and facilitated cooperative activities.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. The principal will make a regular report at each Board of Management meeting regarding the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

3. Strategies, Rewards and Sanctions

Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

The staff of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS uses the following positive strategies to effectively manage behaviour in our school.

All staff members enforce agreed expectations in a consistent manner. Good manners are modelled by staff. School rules are discussed with the children at the beginning of each school year and at other

times during the year as appropriate. Teachers and pupils discuss issues involving inappropriate behaviour. Rules are taught through the “Learn Together” ethical curriculum and SPHE lessons. Circle time, assemblies, class charters and Walk Tall are used successfully throughout the school to promote a positive atmosphere.

Classroom

- Behavioural expectations in each class are consistent with the school’s ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupils have input in devising the class rules.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave, with an emphasis on responsibility to peers rather than solely to the teachers.
- Good behaviour is acknowledged, and sanctions for misbehaviour are clear and consistent.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies are in use to sustain pupil interest and motivation.

Break times

Adequate supervision is provided in the yard, and teachers often participate in play.

- Supervision needs are assessed each September depending on new pupil intake and staffing allocation. Certain children may be identified as needing closer supervision or may have learning targets around yard behaviour addressed in their support plan. Children are visible in the yard at all times
- ISAs help children who have special educational needs to play safely with their friends and help the teacher on duty to observe the general safety of the pupils.
- On rainy days, the supervising teacher ensures each class is engaged in meaningful social play in their classrooms.
- Pupils are accompanied going to and returning from the yard by the class teacher.
- Pupils must ask for permission to leave the yard if they need to use the bathroom.
- On occasion, teachers will coordinate games, though participation is optional.
- Anti-social, dangerous or hurtful behaviour is forbidden (e.g. wrestling, head locks, all forms of the game bulldog, play-fighting, bullying, intimidation, teasing, jeering, fighting, spitting, kicking, charging in groups, bad language, exclusion).

Other areas in the school

Children are expected to walk through corridors at all times. Children are expected to listen and show respect during assemblies.

School-related activities and outings

Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour will apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. Pupils are expected to follow the school’s Code of Behaviour during school tours, extracurricular activities and all other school-linked events. Pupils are expected to follow the directions of the teacher and accompanying adults with regard to road safety. The highest standard of behaviour is necessary on all school outings because of the increased risk to the safety of the children and to achieve the purpose of the outing. In individual cases where the teacher, in consultation with the principal, cannot be fully satisfied that such behaviour will be forthcoming on an outing with a particular child, the child will not be allowed on the outing or will only be able to

attend with parental supervision. Particular significance will be attached to behaviour on previous outings.

Distance Learning

At times of extended school closures, children will engage in learning activities at home while communicating with their teachers and classmates through internet portals, emails and other methods. In all these interactions, this Code of Behaviour, and particularly the Anti-Bullying Policy, apply. This applies whether students are using their own technology devices or ones loaned by the school. Interactions are monitored by class teachers to ensure the key concepts of respect and kindness are maintained. Further information about this can be found in the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Rewards and Sanctions

The following are examples of the strategies which will be used to encourage appropriate behaviour:

- Teach lessons around behavioural issues,
- Drama/Role-play,
- Brainstorming solutions,
- Highlighting and acknowledging good behaviour,
- Class meetings,
- Circle time,
- Special Needs Assistants and Learning Support teachers assisting class teachers in maintaining strategies with their allocated children,
- Consistency in use of strategies and approaches,
- Involve students in problem-solving,
- Address the problem as early as possible,
- Contracts agreed between children
- Written reflections,
- Keeping the response detached and objective, focusing on the behaviour and not on the person,
- Notes home where appropriate,
- Cooling-off period before discussion,
- Yard sanctions including age-appropriate time-outs done in a way to promote reflection on behaviour rather than to cause shame, accompanying a supervising adult for the remainder of break, referral to the principal, confiscating a piece of play equipment or ending a game.

Rewards

Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the management of behaviour in school. We will endeavour to develop each child's intrinsic motivation to support the creation of a positive and caring learning community. Therefore, positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers, but an over-reliance on external rewards will be actively avoided.

Teachers can choose from a variety of ways to promote positive behaviour including:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval,

- A visit to another class or principal for commendation,
- Praise in front of class group,
- Specific and targeted praise through certificates or other forms of recognition,
- Written or verbal communication with a parent,
- Choice of activity,
- Extra playtime for the whole class,
- Displaying children's work,
- Written acknowledgement on child's work,
- Carefully considered use of whole-class targets to encourage a whole-class approach to positive behavior and
- Targeted and limited use of stickers, stars or other merit systems on a temporary basis and with the assurance that all children will be able to succeed in achieving these merits. If a reward system is established, it is not used in a manner that would lead to comparison of children's behaviour in a public way.

Sanctions

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour with due regard to age and emotional development.

Sanctions are used to help the child:

- change a pattern of unacceptable behaviour,
- understand and acknowledge the impact of his/her behaviour on others,
- reveal why the behaviour occurred,
- understand that misbehaviour has consequences for him/herself and others,
- explore alternative ways of interacting,
- regain their calm before dealing with the issue,
- reflect on their behaviour,
- help the child gain skills to analyse how their behaviour impacts on their learning and that of the other children,
- understand the seriousness and unacceptability of their behaviour and
- know that there is consistency between home and school around behavioural expectations.

The following are examples of the strategies which will be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- Reason with the child.
- Reprimand and advise on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers in class: The pupil sits at a desk on his/her own within class or being removed to another classroom or principal's office and allows the lesson to continue uninterrupted.
- Children may miss play for a short, age-appropriate period in the playground in the case of unsafe play in the yard.
- The child may be asked to write or draw a reflection on the incident and how he/she might change the behaviour. The child may also be asked to make a written apology as part of a restorative justice approach.

- Referral to principal.
- Communication with parents/guardian regarding behaviour through notes, phone calls or face-to-face meetings.
- Regular separation from peers as well as a shorter school day may be appropriate when specifically recommended by psychologists or other professionals in order to preserve the safety of staff members and students. At all times, a member of staff will be present with a child.

Minor offences are dealt with on the spot by the class teacher. If the concern persists, informal contact may be made with parent/guardians.

Repeated and persistent occurrences after correction by the class teacher are considered serious and would be treated accordingly. Serious offences are recorded by the principal and sanctions may be imposed.

Sanctions for serious breaches of discipline

- (i) Continuous minor breaches of discipline will be recorded by the class teacher and discussed with the principal. Following interventions, if there is no improvement the parents/guardians will be asked to come to the school and discuss the matter with the class teacher and/or principal/deputy principal.
- (ii) Serious breaches of discipline will be reported to the Principal who will discuss the matter with the child and inform and consult with the parent/guardian. Such serious breaches of discipline are documented by both the class teacher and principal. This may result in suspension or expulsion. (See the later section devoted to this topic.)

Examples of behaviour that is considered serious (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Fighting,
- Physical violence,
- Defiance,
- Disrespect and rudeness,
- Stealing/lying,
- Destruction of school equipment and people's property,
- Assault,
- Carrying a weapon,
- Graffiti,
- Obscene language,
- Leaving the school premises without permission,
- Using text messages or social media to bully and
- Other ongoing and unresolved bullying behaviour.

Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the schools Anti-Bullying Policy.

4. Exclusion

The Responsibility of the Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- ensure that fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of those procedures
- take special care to ensure that the fair procedures are accessible to people with disabilities or those from different language or cultural backgrounds
- ensure that there are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion.
- ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence.

Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice

Fair procedures will be followed, as required by law, and have two essential parts:

- the right to be heard
- the right to impartiality.

The right to be heard means:

- the right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated.
- the right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account.
- the right to know how the issue will be decided.
- the right to respond to the allegations.
- where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body.

The right to impartiality means:

- the **right to an absence of bias** in the decision-maker for example that if the child of the Principal was accused of misconduct that might warrant suspension or expulsion, the Principal would not be involved in the decision. Similarly, if the child of a member of the Board of Management was accused of misconduct, that parent would absent themselves from the Board for any consideration of the matter by the Board.
- **the right to impartiality** in the investigation and the decision-making.
- The principle of **impartiality in decision-making** means that, where possible, the Principal arranges for another member or members of staff to conduct the investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case and any relevant information to the Principal.

Where circumstances require the Principal to conduct the investigation as well as making a finding and proposing the sanction, he or she will act fairly and in an objective way and ensure that the investigation has been fully and fairly conducted. The person alleging the misbehaviour, or who is a victim, or a witness should not usually conduct the investigation.

Thoughtful application of professional judgement and knowledge of the requirements of fair procedures will generally guide decision-making about suspension and expulsion. However, in circumstances of particular complexity, school authorities may need to seek legal advice to support their decision-making.

Applying fair procedures

In a school, fair procedures apply to:

- the **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and
- the process of **decision-making** as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanction to impose.

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of a particular school.

Involving the Gardaí

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The advice and support of the Juvenile Liaison Officer will be sought.

Suspension

For the purpose of this policy, suspension is defined as:

Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

During the period of a suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

Authority to suspend

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This authority is delegated to the Principal, formally in writing, reflecting the provisions of the Guidelines, any relevant legal requirements and Articles of Management, where appropriate.

The grounds for suspension

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. 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 serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Determining the appropriateness of suspending a student

Where the purpose of a proposed suspension is clearly identified, and that purpose cannot be achieved in any other way, suspension can have value. Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour. School management will consider the risk of any unwanted outcomes from suspension, such as an increased sense of alienation from school that could lead to a cycle of behavioural and academic problems.

Factors to consider before suspending a student (see Appendix A):

- 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 and
- the possible impact of suspension.

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension will:

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

Immediate suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time represents a serious threat to the safety of students, staff of the school or any other person. Fair procedures will be applied.

Inappropriate use of suspension

Students will not be suspended for:

- poor academic performance,
- poor attendance or lateness or
- minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

Rolling suspension

A student will not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:

- they engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension,
- fair procedures are observed in full and
- the standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

Informal or unacknowledged suspension

Exclusion of a student for part of the school day, as a sanction, or asking parents to keep a child from school, as a sanction, is a suspension. Any exclusion imposed by the school is a suspension, and will follow the Guidelines relating to suspension.

Open-ended suspension

Students will not be suspended for an indefinite period. Any such suspension would be regarded as a de-facto expulsion and would be treated as such under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*. See Appendix I.

Procedures in Respect of Suspension (see Appendix B):

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

1. Inform the student and parents
2. Give an opportunity to respond
3. Procedures in relation to immediate suspension
4. Determine the period of suspension

Appeals

The Board of Management should 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 may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.

At the time parents 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 Skills under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* and will be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the suspension

The Principal will notify the parents and the 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 (for example, 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 Skills (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

The letter will be clear and easy to understand. Care will be taken in communicating with parents who may have reading difficulties or whose first language is not the language of the school.

Engaging with student and parents

Where a decision to suspend has been made, in order to maximize the impact and value of suspension the Principal or another staff member delegated by the Principal will meet with the parents to emphasize their responsibility in helping the student to behave well when the student returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this. Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

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 Skills 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 about the suspension.

Re-integrating the student

The school will have a plan to help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. Successful re-integration goes beyond academic work. Where possible, the school will arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Clean slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Records and reports

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 Túsla: The principal will report suspensions in accordance with the Túsla reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4) (a)).

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management will review that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective in the school, as appropriate.

Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*.

Authority to expel

The Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority will be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion will 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 unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour,
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist,
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried and
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

Expulsion

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 or
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, school authorities will have tried a series of other interventions and must believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code will include:

- 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 or
- sexual assault.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

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. See Appendix C.

Inappropriate use of expulsion

Expulsion should not be proposed for:

- poor academic performance
- poor attendance or lateness
- minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour 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 the student.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*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 (Department of Education and Skills). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance. Information on the Appeals process will be given to the child's parent/guardian

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.

5. Administration

Keeping Records

Positive and negative behaviour is recorded as follows:

- Incidents may be recorded in the pupil profile, the Individual pupil diary/checklist where necessary and the end-of-school-year report.
- Incidents are recorded on an Incident Record Sheet (Appendix E) which is kept by class teachers. Completed records are kept in the principal's office. Incidents of misbehaviour are discussed with the child/ren involved by the supervising teacher.
- Depending on the seriousness of the incident the class teacher/principal/parent/guardian may be involved. If sanctions are applied they will be chosen from the agreed list.

- Parents/guardians are made aware of issues regarding behaviour at parent teacher meetings and throughout the school year as appropriate.
- See Section 2 regarding the keeping of records related to the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Procedure for Notification of a Pupil's Absence from School

- Parents are made aware of the school's duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the Education Welfare Officer, of the serving of a "school attendance notice" by the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Welfare Board to consult with the child's parents and the principal of the school) on any parent who they conclude is failing to cause the child to attend the school and of the possible consequence of a successful case being taken against the parent (fine and/or imprisonment).
- Parents are asked to notify the school when a child is absent for part of a school day, a school day or more than a school day, in keeping with the school's attendance policy.
- When a child has missed more than 15 days the class teacher informs the principal who records the information and informs the parent/guardian that the non-attendance of their child in school is a case of concern. The Principal informs Túsla when a student is absent in excess of 20 school days.

Please refer to the school's Attendance Policy for further details.

Reference to Other Policies

Other policies which have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour are:

Attendance,
Enrolment and
Health and Safety.

Success Criteria

We will know this policy has been successful when:

- positive behaviour in classrooms, the yard and school environment are observed,
- practices and procedures listed in this policy are consistently implemented by teachers and
- positive feedback is received from staff, parents/guardians, pupils and visitors.

Roles and Responsibilities

The BOM, staff, parents/guardians and pupils of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS have responsibility for supporting and implementing this policy.

- The role of the Board is to support the Code of Behaviour by providing a comfortable, safe environment for staff and pupils and by supporting the Principal and staff in its implementation.
- This policy will be co-ordinated, monitored and implemented by the teaching staff.
- Special Needs Assistants will support the teaching staff in the implementation of the policy.
- Pupils play a part in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by drafting rules, taking part in assemblies and following rules
- Parents/guardians support their children and the school in the promotion of positive behaviour through their commitment to the Code of Behaviour.

Communication, Review and Monitoring

This Code of Behaviour, which incorporates the Anti-Bullying Policy, has been made available to school personnel, is published on the school website and is provided to the Parent-Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron when requested.

This Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually (see Appendix F). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Ratification by the Board of Management:

The Board of Management ratified this revised policy on the date below.

Paul Adams, chairperson

Date of ratification: 18/10/2023

Appendix A: Factors to consider before suspending a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

Appendix B: Procedures in respect of suspension

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

Inform the child and parents

The child and his/her parents will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension. Parents will be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents in writing ensures that there is a formal and permanent record of communication that parents are clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done and underlines to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Give an opportunity to respond

Parents and the child will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the child and his/her parents will provide an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make a case for lessening the sanction and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents 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 invitations made to parents and their response.

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, will be open-ended.

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

The period of suspension

A child 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. The Board of Management will 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* (see *Appeals*).

Appendix C: Factors to consider before expelling a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other children and staff affected by the child's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the child or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the child change his/her behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the child's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other child?
- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the child?
- Will the child be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a child who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

Appendix D: Procedures in respect of expulsion

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 child and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Give parents and the child every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.
- Parents and the child will have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour 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 child and his/her parents will be organised. It provides the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the child's behaviour.
- If the child and his/her parents 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 inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parents 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 misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The principal will:

- inform the parents and the child that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against their child; 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
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents 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 child).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a pupil, 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 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 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 child. Parents 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 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 child should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 (1)*). The 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 EWO 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 in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the EWO.

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 child should be expelled, the EWO must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the child, 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 child 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 child, those concerned should come together with the EWO to plan for the pupil's future education.

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

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the child should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task will be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the child 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.

Appendix E – Record of bullying behaviour

1. Pupil suspected of being bullied

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in alleged bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other _____	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School bus	
Other _____	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern _____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name-calling		Other _____	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN-related	Racist	Membership of the Traveller Community	Other _____

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix F – Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school’s anti-bullying policy, will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that school staff members are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal’s periodic report to the Board?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school’s handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school’s policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Yes
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Yes

Signed: Paul Adams

Date: 18/10/2023

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Matthew Wallen

Date: 18/10/2023

Principal

Appendix G – Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: Parent-Teacher Association

The Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS wishes to inform you that:

The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 18th October 2023.

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix F of the Anti-Bullying Policy (also found at Appendix 4 of the Department’s Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

Signed: Paul Adams
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 18/10/2023

Signed: Matthew Wallen
Principal

Date: 18/10/2023

Appendix H: Certificate of co-operation with the Code of Behaviour

The safety and wellbeing of all children attending our school is of the utmost importance to us. With this in mind, a Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy has been put in place.

We request that parents read the policy carefully with their child/children and discuss the contents. Please sign the following undertaking and return this form to the school.

I confirm that I have read this policy with my child _____, that we have discussed the contents together and that we agree to uphold this policy during the coming years.

Signed by Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please keep the policy document safely at home for future reference.