Stokane National School
Enniscrone Co. Sligo F26C970
Roll No: 14051T Charity Reg No. 20205786
Phone: 096 36673/086 0695093
Principal: Linda McCormack
stokanens@gmail.com www.stokanens.ie

Stokane National School Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

The ethos of our school establishes and supports a strong sense of community and a mutual relationship of respect cultivated between the Board of Management, Staff, children and Parent/Guardians. As a Staff our aim is to create a happy, secure environment for all our pupils. The emphasis in Stokane N.S. is on the positive.

Rationale:

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) schools are obliged 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:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Stokane National School has deemed it necessary to review and update our Code of Behaviour to ensure compliance with the following legislation and guidelines:

- Bí Cineálta procedures to prevent and address bullying.
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023.
- Data Protection 1998 -2018 and EU General Data Personal Regulation 2018 (GDPR)

Aims:

- To clearly communicate expectations for behaviour to pupils, parents, and staff, ensuring a shared understanding and consistent approach.
- To support the safe, respectful and effective running of the school, creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.
- To enable teaching and learning to take place without disruption, so every child can reach their full potential.
- To support the personal, social and academic development of every pupil, recognising individual strengths and needs.
- To promote positive behaviour and develop self-esteem, encouraging pupils to make good choices and take pride in their actions.
- To promote positive behaviour and develop self-esteem, encouraging pupils to make good choices and take pride in their actions.
- To raise awareness of bullying behaviours and empower pupils to respond appropriately and seek help when needed.
- To nurture a sense of responsibility and self-discipline, grounded in respect, empathy and fairness towards others.
- To encourage caring and respectful attitudes, both within the school community and towards the wider environment.

Content of policy

In our Code of Behaviour, we address the following:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour – roles and responsibilities
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
4. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour
5. Suspension / Expulsion
6. Record Keeping

7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the Code of Behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school".

The school recognises that there are times and factors in a child's life that may influence their behaviour. These will be taken into consideration and the child and his/her behaviour may be accommodated as a result.

In compliance with Section 23 (4) of the Education Act, prior to registering a pupil, parents/guardians will be issued with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and on application, parents/guardians will be asked to confirm in writing that they accept the school's policy 'and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code'.

2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour – roles and responsibilities

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Good behaviour is recognised and acknowledged in our school. Children are encouraged and praised for their efforts in maintaining discipline. The following list is a selection of strategies which may be used by individual teachers to affirm and promote positive behaviour in the classroom:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment on a child's exercise book
- A visit to another class or the Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group
- Individual/Group points systems e.g. Class dojo, Trophy Club, Stamps and stickers on children's work

- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Written or verbal communication with parents/guardians
- A small gift/prize
- Homework Pass
- Golden Time – treat, play/Art time
- Class-wide rewards such as a collective treat or extra outdoor time when the whole class meets a target.
- Peer-to-peer praise opportunities (e.g., "kindness tokens" where pupils can recognise each other).
- Showcasing pupils' work on a "Wall of Achievement" or school website/newsletter.
- Leadership opportunities such as mentoring younger pupils, being a playground buddy, or helping with school events.

Teachers' Responsibilities

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- Create a safe learning environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare schoolwork and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour on Aladdin.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Model respectful and positive behaviour at all times.
- Actively teach and reinforce social skills such as cooperation, conflict resolution, and empathy.
- Involve pupils in creating class rules to encourage ownership and responsibility.
- Differentiate rewards and supports to ensure inclusivity for children with additional needs.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.
- Ensure resources (training, materials, staff support) are available to implement the Code of Behaviour.
- Support staff in ongoing professional development around positive behaviour management.
- Promote inclusive practices so that all pupils feel valued and respected.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.
- Act as a role model of positive, respectful communication within the school community.
- Maintain regular communication with staff, parents and pupils regarding the Code of Behaviour.
- Celebrate and share examples of good behaviour across the school.

Parents

Stokane National School strives to foster a positive relationship between staff and parents. Parents are actively involved in the school in a variety of ways e.g. school activities, Board of Management, Parents' Association.

Parental support is vital for the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour. The school, therefore, requests that parents:

- Read this policy and share the contents with their children.
- Give supportive co-operation to school staff in the interest and benefit of their children.
- Co-operate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions.

- Ensure children are punctual and are collected on time.
- Ensure children's attendance is regular. (The school is legally obliged to notify the Education Welfare Services in TUSLA when a child is absent for more than 20 school days annually.
- Give an explanation prior to a pre-arranged absence or following a child's absence by sending a note, phoning the school office or by text message.
- Discuss any issues, other than minor matters, at mutually agreed pre-arranged meetings.
- Attend parent/guardian teacher meetings as necessary.
- Communicate any issue, which troubles you or your child at an early stage.
- Help children with homework, ensuring that it is completed.
- Ensure children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Ensure children have an adequate lunch in accordance with the school's healthy lunch policy.
- Ensure children wear their school uniform.
- Ensure that meetings with school are arranged in advance through the school office, by phone call or email. This can also be arranged at drop off or collection time.
- Support the school's ethos of respect, inclusion, and kindness both at home and in the school setting.
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their actions and learn from mistakes.
- Celebrate and reinforce positive behaviour at home.
- Work in partnership with the school in addressing ongoing behaviour issues constructively.

Commented [1]: by phone call or email or by speaking with class teacher at drop off or collection?

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school do not accept responsibility for pupils before the school gates open at 8:30am. The official opening time of the school is 8.40am. Staff do not accept responsibility after the official closing time of 1.20pm for infants and 2.20pm for other classes, except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Pupils

Pupils play an important role in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers/SNAs and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way, which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow school rules.
- Be honest, take responsibility for their own actions and learn from mistakes
- Be inclusive and respectful of differences (e.g., cultural, religious, ability).
- Use respectful language and manners in all interactions.
- Take care of their own belongings and help keep the school clean and safe.
- Act as an "upstander" by reporting bullying or unkind behaviour to an adult rather than ignoring it.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

a. Classroom

Behavioural expectations are established in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which sets a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupil input is enlisted in devising the class rules. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

Rules in Stokane National School will be created at the beginning of each school year and will reflect these values:

Junior Room:

- Kind words
- Kind hands
- Kind feet

Senior Room:

- Be Gentle……Don't hurt anyone
- Be kind and helpful……Don't hurt people's feelings
- Be honest……Don't cover up the truth
- Work hard……Don't waste time
- Look after property……Don't waste or damage things
- Listen to people……Don't interrupt

Fifth and Sixth classes are expected to be role models in our school;

"*We lead, we model: kindness, respect and responsibility*".

b. The Playground

The following strategies are implemented to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour in the school yard.

- At both break times, a teacher is on duty in the playground, assisted by Specials Needs Assistants (SNAs).
- While the SNAs assist with yard supervision the teacher on duty is responsible for disciplinary matters and SNAs will refer children to the teacher.
- In the event of misbehaviour during yard time, the teacher on duty will address the issue. Time out for one or two minutes may be used at the discretion of the supervising teacher.
- Classroom teachers will be informed of misbehaviour by supervising teacher
- Where deemed necessary, an Incident Form may be filled in by the supervising teacher and given to the class teacher. Any incidents of serious misbehaviour or repeated misbehaviour should be recorded on Aladdin.
- Any accidents or injuries should be recorded in the Yard Book.
- The principal will be informed of serious incidents of misbehaviour. Parents will be notified if deemed necessary.
- All pupils must adhere to the following playground rules: *Kind words, Kind hands, Kind feet.*

c. School related activities

The standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where the pupil, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school, e.g. school tours, games/extra-curricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

4. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Despite the best efforts of schools, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the code of behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.

Responding to unacceptable behaviour

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline 'the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined'.

Teachers will use their professional judgement and their knowledge of the child and the particular circumstances of the behaviour or incident in responding to unacceptable behaviour and in selecting the appropriate sanction. The sanction will be proportionate to the behaviour or incident in question. It may include:

- Reasoning with the pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers.
- Using reflection logs.
- Loss of privileges.
- Time out time, either in the classroom or in another room.
- Referral to Principal.
- Teacher communicating with parents
- Principal communicating with parents.

- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act of 2000).
- Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety.

Bullying

All incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

5. Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

Suspension

Suspension is defined as "requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days"

- For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as gross misbehaviour.
- The principles of ensuring the right to be heard, and the right to impartiality apply in all cases.
- Parents/guardians of a pupil will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.
- Parents/guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.
- Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management of Stokane NS will be informed and the

parents/guardians will be requested to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal.

- If the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period.
- Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information.
- Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board of Management will meet to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians.
- When a decision is taken to suspend a pupil, the Chairperson will notify the parents/guardians and the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend.
- Parents/Guardians have the right to appeal the Board's decision to suspend a pupil.
- Following or during a period of suspension, parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school.
- Parents/guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.
- The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.
- Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

Record Keeping in Relation to Suspensions

In the case of the suspension of a pupil 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.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, including the reasons for and the duration of each suspension. The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the Education Welfare Service reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4)(a)).

Expulsion

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

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (Education Welfare Service TUSLA).

Before expelling a pupil, the Board of Management shall notify the local Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

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

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

- inform the pupil and his/her parents/guardians in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- give parents and the pupil every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

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 should:

- inform the parents/guardians and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- ensure that parents/guardians have records of the allegations against the student of 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 given to the parents and/or guardians.
- notify the parents 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. The Board will:

- review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures.

- undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case.
- hold a hearing where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student.
- allow the Principal and the parents/guardians to put their case in each other's presence.
- allow each party to question the evidence of the other party directly.
- 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.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board will:

- notify the Educational Welfare Officer (TUSLA) in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion.
- inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.
- inform parents/guardians that the Board of Management is writing to inform the Educational Welfare Officer.
- not expel the pupil before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

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 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).

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 should formally confirm the decision to expel.

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.

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.

Pupils with Special Needs

All pupils are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that pupils with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Planning to encourage positive behaviour will be included in the pupil's Support Plan, which is drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians and the class teacher, special education teacher and/or the Principal. Staff will work closely with the home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be taken into consideration. The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs, adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

6. Keeping Records

The school BoM is a data controller of personal data relating to its past, present and future staff, students, parents/guardians and other members of the school community. All such data is treated in accordance with the Data Protection legislation and the terms of our Data Protection Policy.

Data relating to individuals will only be processed in a manner consistent with the purposes for which it was gathered. Information will only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis, and access to it will be strictly controlled.

Records kept in relation to pupils' behaviour both at class and school level are written in a factual and impartial manner.

Records will be kept on Aladdin.

7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

In co-operation with parents and guardians, we strive to help each pupil achieve his/her full potential and so we will promote a positive attitude towards good attendance and punctuality. The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, "the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school." Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

Please refer to the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools (Irish Version) for further information on:

- strategies to promote good attendance
- responding to poor attendance
- recording and reporting attendance

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Success Criteria

- Observation of positive and improved behaviour in classrooms, corridor, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and pupils

Policy Developed: 3rd September, 2025 by Principal and Deputy Principal.

Policy discussed, amended and agreed: 17th September, 2025 by all staff.

Ratified by BOM on: 22nd September, 2025

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal / Secretary of the Board of Management

This policy will be reviewed at the September Meeting of the Board of Management in 2027, unless otherwise deemed necessary.