

THE OLD BOROUGH NATIONAL SCHOOL

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE



The Principal and the teaching staff in consultation with the Board of Management have formulated this code. Having been approved by the Board of Management, it is being issued to you for your information as requested by the Department of Education.

The Board acknowledges that the primary responsibility for the behaviour of pupils rests with parents and appreciates the important role which parents play in supporting good standards of behaviour in school. Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging pupils to abide by school rules, by visiting the school when requested to do so by the Principal or other members of the staff and by ensuring that homework is allocated due time and effort by the child.

The school endeavours to ensure that the individuality of each child attending the school is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption-free environment. Teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn in an environment that is free from disruption and aggression.

The emphasis of the Code of Behaviour is based on the School's ethos, which states that the school is a community where moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, fairness, sensitivity to others, self-respect, self-discipline and civic responsibility, along with the need to recognise right and wrong behaviour, are nurtured and protected. The school actively encourages kindness, forgiveness and the development of empathy and understanding among the pupils. In the interests of good order and safety, it is most important that clearly defined guidelines for behaviour be known and understood by all pupils and that they see parents and teachers engaged in a co-operative enterprise on their behalf.

In school, pupils have to learn to live with crowds, to share adult attention and to accept the authority of staff who act "in loco parentis." Pupils who find it difficult to accept classroom conditions or who do not develop self-control present the school with discipline problems.

The aims of primary education may briefly be stated as follows:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child
- To equip the child to avail themselves of further education so that they may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society

The school is committed to the realisation of these goals and endeavours to create a stimulating and happy environment for all our pupils in which there is good order and a reasonable approach to discipline.

The aims of this Code are:

- To help create a positive learning environment in which all pupils can benefit from the educational services provided by the school.
- To help pupils to become self-disciplined and to encourage good standards of behaviour.
- To help organise large groups so that the school can operate smoothly and safely for the benefit of all.
- To develop respect for fellow pupils, adults, the school, its equipment and environment.
- To help to appreciate differences that exist between pupils and to learn to tolerate these differences

Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner towards themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults.

The property of the individual and of the school must be respected. Pupils are expected to uphold school standards with regard to dress and language.

Pupils should be punctual and regular in attendance. A written explanation for absences must be submitted through Aladdin. The school will notify TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency, when a pupil's absences total 20 days in a school year, in line with the Department's directive. The school will send reminder emails at 10, 15, and 20 days so that parents are aware of the number of days that their child has been absent.

School opens at 8:30am. Parents must supervise their child/children on the school grounds prior to this. School finishes at 1:10pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 2:10pm for 1st - 6th classes. Parents should collect their children on time and all pupils should have vacated the school premises 10 minutes after school ends.

The School Code of Discipline and Behaviour covers:

- Behaviour in class
- Behaviour in the playground
- Behaviour in the school environment (including school trips)
- Homework – see Homework Policy

Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Discipline is a matter for every pupil. A minority of disruptive pupils can adversely affect the educational progress of an entire class. Any behaviour that interferes with this right (e.g. constant disruption of the class or persistent distraction of others) is considered unacceptable behaviour. In order that pupils may derive benefit from the work in class, full co-operation is required from pupils at all times. Pupils must co-operate with instructions given by the teacher.

Pupils must remain seated in the classroom when the teachers are absent from the room and during recreation periods or days when playing outside is not possible.

Behaviour in Class:

Courtesy and respect are fundamental requirements in the classroom. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards any staff member e.g. defiance, cheek, insolence or disobedience cannot be tolerated. Behaviour problems are to some extent situation specific. Because a child's behaviour will vary somewhat according to where or with whom the child is with, teachers and parents do not always "see" the same child.

Behaviour in Playground:

Any behaviour, which endangers one-self or others, is not permitted. Any rough behaviour (e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing, shoving, biting, etc) is forbidden. Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without the express permission of the supervising teacher. This includes re-entering the school building.

Behaviour in the School Environment:

Respect for others is a basic rule. Any kind of verbal or physical abuse of other pupils or members of staff is strictly forbidden. Biting is considered an assault on another pupil. Bullying or intimidation of other pupils will not be tolerated and is always regarded as a serious matter. See Anti-bullying Policy and Cyber-Bullying Policy for further details in relation to incidences of bullying.

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Pupils must show respect for school property

For reasons of safety and in order to avoid accidents, pupils must move about the school in an orderly manner. Pupils must walk in the corridors. Chewing gum is forbidden in the school as it sticks to floors and to school furniture. Willful damage to school property/equipment or graffiti will not be tolerated. The School may seek reimbursement for such damage. School books and property that have been supplied by the school as part of the Primary School Books Scheme must be returned to the school at the end of the year or if your child leaves the school. Books and school property must be kept in good condition at all times.

Praise and Rewards

Encouraging high standards of behaviour among pupils and creating and maintaining an orderly atmosphere for learning in the school will include the use of praise and rewards for good behaviour. It will entail matching the curriculum to the aptitudes of the pupils, the use of effective techniques for motivating pupils and the promotion of sound relationships between pupils and teachers.

It will also involve, in some instances, the application of sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. When sanctions are involved, pupils should understand that what they have done is not acceptable and that it is the misbehaviour that is rejected and not the pupil.

Misbehaviour in infant classes is normally overcome by a verbal reprimand and/or by referring the matter to parents.

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The strategy / strategies used in any given situation will be determined by the seriousness of the misbehaviour:

- Reasoning (Discussing the incident(s)) with the child
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary (supervised) separation from peers, friends or others

- Behaviour Reflection Form may be used
- Prescribing additional work (including weekends)
- Communication with parents
- Pupil Report System
- Reflection time inside during break
- Referral to Principal
- Loss of privileges e.g. school outings
- Shortened school day
- Suspension
- Expulsion

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Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested, in writing, to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules of the National Schools.

Before resorting to serious sanctions (e.g. suspension), the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss and appeal their child's case. A procedure for appeal of suspension/expulsion is as follows:

- Parents may request an appeal by writing to the Board of Management within 3 days of notification of suspension/expulsion.
- A meeting between parents, principal, teacher and chairperson will be arranged at which the case may be pleaded.
- The decision of the Board will be given within 3 days. If the decision of the Board of Management is not to the satisfaction of the parents, they may appeal to the Department of Education under section 29 of the Education Welfare Act. This appeal only refers to (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year (See

Circular 20/02). Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents.

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards any staff member or visitor will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. A suspension shall normally consist of 3 days.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with rule 130 (6). Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also from support services within the wider community e.g. Community Care Services provided by Health Boards.

Parents are required to:

- Become familiar with the school's policy document in relation to discipline.
- Co-operate with the school with regard to the implementation of its policy on discipline.
- Communicate regularly with the school about factors likely to affect the behaviour of their children in school.

This code will be subject to revision at intervals.

The Board of Management wishes to thank you for your co-operation and continued support.

Signed: 

Revd. Canon David Gillespie
Acting Chairman, Board of Management

Date: 1st October 2025

Appendix: Sanctions

Minor Offences

Examples may include:

- Interruptive talking
- Annoying or irritating others
- Interfering with other children and/or their property
- Inattentiveness
- Rough play

These may be dealt with by verbal reprimand and/or removal from peers for age appropriate period of time.

More Serious Offences

Examples may include:

- Destruction of another's property
- Showing lack of respect to staff
- Constantly interrupting and back-answering
- Repeated rough play
- Use of bad language

These may be dealt with by withdrawal of privileges, completion of Behaviour Reflection Form, or by being sent to the Principal.

Serious Offences

Examples may include:

- Stealing
- Destruction of school property
- Serious, racist or offensive language/remarks
- Assault on others
- Bullying (see school's Anti Bullying Policy)
- Cyber-bullying (see school's Cyber-Bullying Policy)
- Use of an electronic device/camera without school permission
- Smoking, vaping, alcohol or substance abuse
- Supplying or sale of illegal substances
- Possession of a weapon, penknife or potential weapon

These may be dealt with by retaining a child in the classroom, by withdrawal of privileges, by communication with parents, by meeting with parents, meeting with principal or by referral to the Board of Management with a view to possible suspension or expulsion. A shortened day may be considered in the case of Infants.

