

BLESSINGTON EDUCATE
TOGETHER NATIONAL
SCHOOL

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

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| Ratified by Board of Management on: | |
| Signed: | |
| Date: | |
| Chairperson, Board of Management | |

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1.0 RATIONALE

The Blessington Educate Together National School (BETNS) Code of Behaviour is written in accordance with Circular 20/90 of the Department of Education and Science on school discipline, the Education and Welfare Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act of 2004.

1.1 SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND ETHOS

Central to BETNS's Code of Behaviour is the fostering of a respectful atmosphere that informs all other school policies as well as everyday school life. This code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by all partners in the children's education.

Our school operates under the direct patronage of Educate Together. The four underlying principles of our ethos are:

- Co-educational
- Child-centred
- Multi denominational
- Democratically run

Children's chances of success and happiness in life depend considerably upon their ability to make responsible choices. To assist in fostering maturity in our children, we have developed a whole school approach to discipline. A central concept is the basic fact that no child should misbehave. When anyone does misbehave, then he or she is making a choice to do so. Children have to know that good behaviour brings desirable consequences.

1.2 AIMS

- To create an environment where all partners in the school community (i.e. children, teachers, Board of Management and Parents/Guardians) are safe, respected and valued.
- To promote self-discipline.
- To create an environment where the children and their teachers can reach their creative and intellectual potential without disruption.
- To have the framework in place to help the school run smoothly.
- To establish effective means of communications between the children, teachers, parents/guardians and Board of Management.
- To help children to acquire and develop moral and ethical values and a respect for the belief and values of others.
- To create an environment in the school that respects, values and accommodates diversity across the following nine grounds as described in the Equal status Act 2004 - gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

2.0 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All partners have rights and responsibilities, which require us to behave in certain ways. Many of these are shared or common to Children, Parents/Guardians, Teachers/Principal and Board of Management.

2.1 CHILDREN

Children have the right:

- To be educated in a safe, happy and secure environment.
- To grow intellectually, emotionally and physically in an atmosphere of understanding of special needs and disability.
- To be treated as an individual with due respect and regard for others within the school community.
- To be listened to, to be allowed to question and to be treated with respect.
- To be able to express their emotions, doubts and beliefs.
- To be free from all forms of abuse, whether physical, emotional, mental or sexual.
- To receive information about topics and concerns affecting their lives (including information on the Code of Behaviour).

Children are to be responsible for the Eight Golden Rules:

1. Kind hands, kind feet, kind words.
2. Do your best work and let other do the same.
3. Be honest; tell the truth.
4. Come to school on time and be prepared.
5. Be fair; be friendly.
6. Respect your property and everybody else's.
7. Be a good listener.
8. Follow instructions from all staff.

2.1.1 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with Parents/Guardians and the teacher, learning support/resource teacher, and/or Principal will work closely with 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 invaluable.

2.2 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians have the right:

- To access and to receive regular information and communication with the Class Teacher and/or Principal.
- To respect, understanding and confidentiality.
- To receive regular updates on the progress of the child/children.
- To question a teacher's actions.
- To be consulted about disciplinary action at an early stage in the process.
- To appeal to a higher authority, e.g. Board of Management, Department of Education.
- Of access to all approved policies concerning the school (BETNS).

Parents/Guardians are to be responsible for:

- Providing firm guidance and positive role models for children.
- Their child's/children's behaviour on the school premises.
- Being involved in their children's learning.
- Ensuring homework is completed.
- Ensuring children come to school on time.
- Ensuring children come prepared for school with pencils, books etc.
- Ensuring children have enough sleep and food.
- Keeping in touch with school to ensure their full understanding of their child's/children's learning, progress and behaviour.
- Communicating to the Class teacher/Principal any problems that might affect their child's/children's performance and/or behaviour in school.
- Completing and signing absence forms when a child is absent from school.

2.3 TEACHERS

Teachers have the right:

- To educate in an environment free from disruption.
- To be respected and held in proper esteem.
- To full and open communication with Parents/Guardians.
- To information on the child, their family background and easy access to Parents/Guardians when necessary.
- To voice concerns about the child's safety, behaviour and academic progress primarily to Parents/Guardians and if necessary other authorities in a confidential manner.
- To expect backup, support and co-operation from Parents/Guardians for their work.
- To confidentiality.
- To be listened to.
- To appeal to a higher authority, e.g. Board of Management, Department of Education, Union.
- To receive adequate facilities and resources appropriate to their teaching duties.

Teachers support and implement the schools Code of Behaviour. They are also responsible for –

- The children in their care.
- Creating a positive atmosphere/environment for learning.
- Being firm and fair.
- Treating boys and girls equally.
- Being prepared for classwork.
- Giving equal attention to all children.
- Communicating with Parents/Guardians on issues concerning their child's learning and behaviour.
- Having positive expectations for children.
- Ensuring opportunities for disruption are minimised.
- Checking and correcting homework.
- Sending children home with appropriate amounts of homework for their age/class.
- Informing children what is expected from them in terms of behaviour.

2.4 PRINCIPALS

Principals are responsible for –

- Promoting a positive climate in the school.
- Ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arranging for review of the Code of Behaviour as required.
- Ensuring that all instances of serious misbehaviour that may result in either suspension or expulsion are dealt with in a fair, impartial manner and in a timely fashion.

2.5 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management is responsible for –

- Protecting and promoting the ethos of the school.
- Ensuring effective educational management of the school.
- Providing a management and support structure to support the Principal and staff in the fulfilment of the school's aims and objectives.
- Ensuring that the needs of the child are identified and responded to.
- Ensuring school plans are developed, implemented and regularly evaluated.
- Providing a safe comfortable environment.
- Supporting the principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour and all other school policies
- Ratifying the Code of Behaviour and all other school policies.
- Ensuring that all instances of serious misbehaviour that may result in either suspension or expulsion are dealt with in a fair, impartial manner and in a timely fashion.

3.0 GENERAL BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

The following are the general guidelines of the Code of Behaviour in use in the school:

- Respect, courtesy and co-operation to be shown at all times towards other children, teachers, support staff, Board of Management and Parents/Guardians, in the classroom, the playground, on school outings, or any after school activities.
- Children are expected to attend everyday unless there is a genuine reason for absence.
- Respect to be shown by the children towards their own and other children's property, school property and environment.
- Respect to be shown for other people's space, i.e. no verbal or physical violence or aggression, or any form of bullying behaviour (as defined in the Anti-Bullying Policy).
- If a Parent/Guardian has an issue of behaviour relating to another child in the School, they should relate their concern firstly to the class teacher and if necessary, the Principal. Under no circumstances should the child be approached directly by the Parent/Guardian.
- Respect for children's own feelings, i.e. it is okay to feel sad, quiet etc.
- Respect for other people's feelings.
- Children are to behave in an orderly fashion in the classroom, moving around the school, going to and from the playground, on school outings or any after school activities (either held in or away from the school) and while travelling on the school bus.
- Children are asked to come to and leave school on time.
- Children are asked to bring to school each day all books, copies and materials necessary to do their classwork properly.
- Children are asked to complete assigned work (written and oral) both at school and at home.
- Children are asked to listen to others and to take turns to speak in class.
- Children must not behave in any way which endangers themselves or others and are asked to take care around other children at all times.
- Children are asked to include others in games.
- Children must remain within the designated playground boundaries during break times.
- Children must not leave school without permission from the teaching staff.
- Children may only leave school with permission from the teaching staff and must be accompanied by a Parent/Guardian or other responsible adult, including but not restricted to and Uncle, Aunt, Grandparent, older sibling etc.
- All personal electronic equipment (including mobile phone, iPods etc) may not be turned on or used at any time during the school day. This will result in confiscation and the phone being returned to the Parent/Guardian. Refer to Personal electronic Devices Acceptable Use Policy.

4.0 COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

4.1 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The Code of Behaviour will be given to all Parents/Guardians on enrolment and where updates to the policy have been made and require Parental attention.

The Code of Behaviour will be required to be read by all Parents/Guardians. A form will be provided (Appendix A) to each Parent/Guardian, which will require their signature, and this will be taken to indicate that the policy has been 'Read and Understood'.

4.2 PERSONAL CONTACT

The support and co-operation of Parents/Guardians is essential if the Code of Behaviour in school is to operate effectively. If a good relationship exists between Parents/Guardians and school staff, the children will ultimately reap the benefit. To foster good communication, the following procedures are school policy:

- 4.2.1 The Parents/Guardians will be contacted.
- 4.2.2 Personal contact with teacher and/or Principal in the form of a letter or phone call.
- 4.2.3 A meeting with the class teacher and/or Principal and Parents/Guardians.

4.3 ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The procedure on absence can be found in the 'Attendance, absence and punctuality policy'. Children are expected to attend everyday unless there is a genuine reason for absence.

- If your child is unable to attend school an 'Absent note' (available from the class teacher or school office) must be sent with your child upon his/her return to school explaining the reason for absence.
- If your child is likely to be absent for more than two days then we ask that you advise the school as soon as possible for the absence.
- If any child is absent from school for twenty days or more cumulatively since the start of the current school year, Under Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the School must notify the National Education Welfare Board. We will therefore notify you, in writing, if your child has been absent for more than fifteen days. Another letter will be sent to you if your child is absent for twenty days and the authorities will be notified.

5.0 STRATEGIES TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results. Redirection of negative behaviour into positive tasks/behaviour is actively encouraged. If this fails, sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour with due regard to age and emotional development.

- All staff share our school ethos which emphasises care, respect and responsibility. The Staff treat children in their care with respect and build up positive relationships with them.
- There are good relationships between teachers, parents and pupils and a happy school atmosphere.
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Good school and class routines are in operation. Core routines necessary for the smooth running of classroom learning are clearly established – e.g. entry to the classroom, settling for whole class teaching, appropriate seat planning, transition time routines, how to fairly get teachers attention, noise level for pair/group work. etc
- BETNS regularly have school assemblies where success (in relation to behaviour, attendance, class and homework) is acknowledged, rewarded and celebrated.
- Positive behaviour may be acknowledged through the use of a note in the homework journal, by praising children on their behaviour and by rewarding them.
- Teachers ensure that the class timetable is as varied as possible and present a balanced and interesting educational programme for the children.
- Problems are noticed and dealt with as soon as possible.
- The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills such as decision-making, conflict resolution, communication and self awareness, self-esteem and respect and care for others.
- Children are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur clear, consistent consequences. Within BETNS ‘The Planets’ system is used. This consists of pictures of the Earth and four planets (labelled Steps 1 through 5). The names of the children are placed on the Earth. When a child misbehaves a clear warning is given that they will be put on the first step and that there will be a consequence to their behaviour. If the behaviour continues the child’s name is placed onto Step 1 and for example, 1 minute of playtime will be missed as a consequence. If the child continues to misbehave, progression to the next step (step 2) means losing 5 minutes of play, step 3 requires losing 10 minutes of play, step 4 would require leaving the classroom and step 5 requires informing the parent/guardian of the behaviour e.g. through the homework journal. At any time, if the behaviour improves there can be a return to a lower step or the earth thus encouraging the child to behave.

5.1 APPROACHES TO REWARDS AND PRAISE

BETNS places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. Our school wide approach to rewards and praise is based around 'house' points. Each class throughout the school is divided into the same four groups, called houses, and each has a house point chart. House points are awarded for good work/behaviour by individuals or through team work. Each week, the house with most house points gets a reward of golden time in which the children can choose an activity they wish to do for a certain time period, this could include for example extended computer time; extended story time; extended PE.

The use of the same houses encourages both same age and cross age co-operative behaviour, fostering a positive group identity where the older children act as mentors to the younger ones.

Other positive approaches to rewards and praise include the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A word of praise in front of a group or class

It is necessary also to ensure that the giving of praise is sensitive to the age and personality of the child because certain pupils may prefer private praise such as notes of approval in their copy to being singled out and embarrassed by public praise.

- A comment in a child's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- Awarding some special responsibility or privilege
- Informing parent – written/verbal communication. This could include a note in the pupil's homework journal or a letter/postcard home
- Special Class treats – golden-time; extra break/PE; watch a DVD; class outing/field trip
- Homework passes
- Shining Stars (certificate awarded for good behaviour and class work) presented by Class teachers
- Realt na Seachtaine – awarded for using good Irish
- Reduced homework on agreed nights
- Graduation ceremony

5.2 SANCTIONS

As previously stated, BETNS place greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than sanctions. However if the redirection of negative behaviour into positive tasks or behaviour fails, sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour with due regard to age and emotional development. The purpose of the sanctions listed below, and other strategies, is aimed to promote positive behaviour and discourage repeated misbehaviour.

1. A verbal reprimand, to include reasoning and advising how to improve.
2. Temporary separation from other children or stands apart from the group until calm and ready to resume work. This strategy is to be used at the discretion of the teacher, depending on the situation and the age of the child.
3. The child is removed to another classroom as a calming measure.
4. The child is required to apologise sincerely for the specific misbehaviour.
5. A record will be kept of continuous misbehaviours in class and yard, and of all serious misbehaviours in order to identify patterns of behaviour.
6. The child is deprived of a favourite break time activity or extra work may be assigned to the child, the Parents/Guardians are informed depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour.
7. Parents/Guardians are contacted about behaviour in writing (see Section 5.3 Yellow card system) depending on the frequency and/or seriousness.
8. In certain circumstances, a child may be asked to write a letter of apology, which must be signed by the Parents/Guardian.

The following sanctions (9 – 12) are given in more detail in Section 7.0 Suspension and Section 8.0 Expulsion.

9. Children are sent to the Principal or deputy Principal (in the Principals absence) for continually occurring or serious misbehaviours.
10. Parents/Guardians are requested to meet with Teacher and or Principal.
11. Referral to the Board of Management.
12. Suspension (Under Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000) used to deal with continuously disruptive children or with a serious breach of discipline.

5.3 YELLOW CARD SYSTEM

The Yellow Card system is designed to address incidents of serious or repeated misbehaviour. The system works as follows:

1. An Incident Sheet (see Appendix B) will be filled out detailing the nature of the misbehaviour.
2. The teacher reporting the incident, the pupil, and the Principal/Deputy Principal will sign an Incident Sheet.

3. A photocopy of the incident sheet will be sent home, as a point of information and the parent will be informed via the homework journal. They will be requested to sign the photocopy and return it to the school. It is then kept in the child's file. The original remains in the School Incident Book.
4. On a second recorded incident, a Yellow Card will be issued to the child. The parents/guardians must arrange a meeting with the class teacher to discuss the Yellow Card. (see Appendix C)
5. This will have to be signed by the class teacher, the Principal and the parents/guardians.
6. Following the issue of a Yellow Card, another two recorded incidents of misbehaviour will warrant a second Yellow Card. (see Appendix D)
7. If a child gets two Yellow Cards, they are automatically considered for suspension. Suspension (Rule 130 National Schools) is used to deal with continuously disruptive pupils or with serious breaches of discipline.
8. The decision to issue Incident Sheets and Yellow Cards rests with the staff of the school.
9. All decisions regarding the suspension of a child in BETNS will be considered/authorised by the Board of Management at the request of the Principal at the following scheduled meeting.
10. Yellow Cards and incident sheets do not accumulate from term to term.

6.0 EXCLUSION (SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION) FROM SCHOOL

Access to education shapes the life chance of children in a fundamental way. For this reason, a proposal to exclude a child through suspension or expulsion is a very serious step, warranted only by repeated instances of serious misbehaviour or by gross misbehaviour.

All decisions regarding the suspension and/or expulsion of a child in BETNS will be authorised by the Board of Management at the request of the Principal.

The following suspension and exclusion sections have been written in accordance with section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, utilising the NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools'.

7.0 SUSPENSION

Suspension is defined as:

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

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

7.1 AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a child. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the child in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of other children or staff of the school, or any other person.

7.2 GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a child requires serious grounds such, but not limited to:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Deliberate continued defiance.
- Bullying (as defined in the Anti-Bullying Policy) including sexist or racist remarks.
- Continued fighting when asked to stop.
- Smoking or use of prohibited drugs.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

7.3 DETERMINING APPROPRIATENESS OF SUSPENDING A PUPIL

The purpose of a proposed suspension must be clearly identified. If that purpose cannot be achieved in any other way, suspension can have value. However, suspension can be counter-productive if used without a clear rationale or without measuring its impact and value.

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, giving the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and to give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour.

The Board of Management will undertake a detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to suspend a pupil. Further information can be found in the NEWB 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools'

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

- Whether the expulsion is a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of expulsion.

7.3.1 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SUSPENSION

Suspension will not be used 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 is dangerous can be a serious matter. The behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

7.4 FORMS OF SUSPENSION

7.4.1 'GENERAL' SUSPENSION

Repeated less serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour that have not been rectified by disciplinary measures short of suspension. In such cases formal written warning detailing the unacceptable behaviour will have been submitted to Parents/Guardians along with an explanation of what is required of the pupil.

7.4.2 IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of other pupils or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

7.4.3 AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION

The Board of Management may decide, following consultation with the Principal, Parents/Guardians, teachers and pupils, that particular named behaviours (as outlined in Section 8.2) incur suspension as a sanction. However, the general decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty of the Board of Management to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

7.4.4 ROLLING SUSPENSION

A pupil should 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.
- The standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil.

7.4.5 INFORMAL SUSPENSION

Exclusion of a pupil for part of the school day, as a sanction, or asking Parents/Guardians 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 procedures listed in this section.

7.5 SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures.

- 7.5.1 The pupil will be informed of the precise grounds that gave rise to a potential suspension and will be given an opportunity to respond before a suspension decision is formalised.
- 7.5.2 In cases where the suspension is to take effect immediately, such as in the interests of health and safety, parents/guardians will be informed by telephone, with written follow up.
- 7.5.3 The parents/guardians of the pupil will be informed in writing of the situation and invited to come to the school for a meeting.
- 7.5.4 Pupils will not be sent home during a school day unless collected by a parent/guardian or some other suitable arrangement is made. All suspension decisions will include a formal letter of notification that will include, at least:
 - Notice of the suspension
 - Effective date of the suspension
 - Duration of the suspension
 - Reasons for the suspension

Where appropriate, this letter may also include some or all of the following:

- Expectations of the pupil while on suspension.
- Reference to the importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter causing suspension.
- A statement that the pupil is under the care and responsibility of parent/guardians while suspended.
- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed of the suspension.
- Information of the appeal rights and procedures regarding the suspension.
- Requirements to be met for the pupil's return to school.

7.6 PERIOD OF SUSPENSION

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

Principal will request that the Board of Management convene to sanction a suspension period as defined below.

The sanction of suspension allows the pupil a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. The Board of Management recognise the serious nature of suspension and take ultimate responsibility for all sanction lengths, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

A pupil may be suspended for up to three days, and should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

If the Principal is proposing a suspension longer than three days, Board of Management will consider and approve, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

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

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the pupil 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 (Refer to Section 8.7 Appeals).

7.7 APPEALS

Where the Board of Management has suspended a Pupil, the Parents/Guardians have the right to appeal. This may be achieved through the following routes:

- 7.7.1 **Appealing directly to the Board of Management**
Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Management stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. However, the school may insist that the pupil remain at home while the appeal proceeds.
- 7.7.2 **Appealing directly to the Patron, Educate Together**
The Patron will provide the appeal process to the Parents/Guardians.

- 7.7.3 **Appealing under Section 29 of the Education Act**
An appeal of a suspension decision may also be made under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, where a suspension would bring the cumulative period of suspension in any one school year to 20 days or more. Information regarding this right of appeal will be provided with formal notification of the suspension, if applicable.

7.8 REMOVAL OF SUSPENSION

In the event that an appeal as detailed in Section 8.7 is successful, the suspension will be lifted and if the suspension has already been served, it will be expunged from the pupil's record.

Beyond success in such appeals, a suspension may also be rescinded in the following circumstances:

- A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason. For example, new circumstances come to light after the suspension has been applied that would have mitigated the sanction had they been known beforehand.
- The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998

7.9 COMPLETION OF SUSPENSION

Upon completion of a suspension, the following procedures may apply for the formal reintroduction of the pupil into the school.

- Parents may be requested to attend with the pupil upon his return to school.
- The 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.
- A written or verbal apology may be required for the pupil for his misbehaviour.
- The pupil may be required to enter into a contract of good behaviour or other conditions that may be specified before returning to school.

7.10 AFTER THE SUSPENSION ENDS

7.10.1 RE-INTEGRATING THE PUPIL

The school will help the pupil to take responsibility for catching up on work missed during the suspension period. This will help avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifies a cycle of academic failure. Successful re-integration goes beyond academic work. A

suspended pupil may feel angry or resentful about their suspension, and these feelings can trigger problems with reintegration that, in turn, may lead to further problem behaviour.

Where possible, the school should arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the pupil during the re-integration process

7.10.2 CLEAN SLATE

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a pupil should 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 should expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

7.11 SUSPENSION RECORDS AND REPORTS

7.11.1 RECORDS OF INVESTIGATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Formal written records should 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.

7.11.2 REPORT TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

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

7.11.3 REPORT TO THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD

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

7.12 REVIEW OF USE OF SUSPENSION

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

8.0 EXPULSION

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school on a pupil and as such, will only be exercised by the Board of Management in relation to extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. In cases where the Principal judges that a pupil's actions are such that expulsion should be considered, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management. Given the severity of the potential sanction, the school, will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- 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) as appropriate.

8.1 AUTHORITY TO EXPEL

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated.

8.2 GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION

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

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

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

In general, there are two sets of circumstances in which exclusion may be considered to be appropriate by the school.

8.2.1 ‘AUTOMATIC’ EXPULSION

In very rare cases, the extreme behaviour of a pupil is so pervasive that teaching and learning can become extremely difficult for both the class teacher and the other children. Such cases include but are not limited to:

- Disrupting the class so seriously thereby preventing other pupils from learning.
- The pupil being uncontrollable and not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority.
- The pupil being a danger to himself or to others.
- When guarantees of reasonable behaviour following repeated suspensions are not forthcoming or not being met.
- The pupil’s conduct acting as a source of serious bad example and having an adverse influence on other pupils in the school.

8.2.2 EXPULSION FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence of a very serious nature. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include, but are not limited to:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school.
- Sexual assault.
- Causing major damage to school property.
- Arriving in school under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Serious burglary or theft.
- Gross insubordination to the Principal or other staff members.
- Open Possession and/or Brandishing of an offence weapon, including but not confined to knives, swords, air guns, clubs etc

8.3 DETERMINING APPROPRIATENESS OF EXPELLING A PUPIL

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction, the Board of Management will undertake a detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a pupil. Further information can be found in the NEWB ‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools’.

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

- The possible impact of expulsion.

8.3.1 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF EXPULSION

Expulsion will not be used 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 is dangerous can be a serious matter. The behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

8.4 EXPULSION PROCEDURES

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

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

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

8.4.1 A DETAILED INVESTIGATION CARRIED OUT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL

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

1. Inform the pupil and their Parents/Guardians the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. This will occur both verbally and in writing.
2. Give Parents/Guardians and the pupil every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
3. Parents/Guardians will be invited to the school for a meeting to discuss the misbehaviour.

8.4.2 A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL

Where the Principal has formed 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:

1. Inform the parents and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
2. Ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the pupil; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
3. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents.
4. Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
5. Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
6. Ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

8.4.3 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. It should 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 pupil).

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a pupil, it must hold a hearing.

At the hearing, the Principal and the Parents/Guardians put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should 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 pupil. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

8.4.4 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 pupil 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)) using NEWB form 60134 'Notice of intention to expel a student'.

The Board of Management will refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The pupil cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, s4A).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

8.4.5 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 pupil should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the pupil, 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 pupil 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 pupil, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the pupil's future education.

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

8.4.6 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 pupil should be expelled, the Board of Management should formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the pupil should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the pupil.

8.5 APPEALS

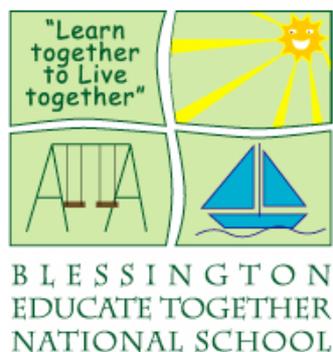
A Parent/Guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the Parent/Guardian.

The appeal should be made in writing on the Section 29 Appeals Application Form (refer to specimen copy Appendix E) and addressed, by signed letter or fax, to the Appeals Administration Unit. The Parent/Guardian appealing the decision should at the same time notify the school of the appeal or, alternatively, send a copy of the completed Application Form to the school. Appeals Application Forms may be obtained from the school or from the Appeals Administration Unit c/o Department of Education and Science, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil.

8.6 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.



The school wishes to foster a close partnership with Parents/Guardians. Towards this end, the school is committed to keeping Parents/Guardians fully informed when persistent or serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour occur. The school recognises that Parents/Guardians have a key role to play in ensuring that pupils abide by the Code of Behaviour and thus avoid any disciplinary action or other consequences that may follow from unacceptable behaviour. Accordingly, as laid out in Section 23 (4) of the *Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, it is the policy of the school that parents/guardians complete the declaration below as a necessary part of the process of enrolling a pupil in the school and/or if major amendments have been made to the policy.

I have read and understood the Code of Behaviour of Blessington Educate Together National School and agree to abide by the regulations contained therein.

First Signature: _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Second Signature: _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____

Incident Sheet

Child's Name: _____ **Incident Number:** _____

Date: _____

Class: _____ **Class Teacher:** _____

Supervising Staff Member : _____

Where did the incident occur: _____

Physical

- q Hitting, punching
- q Pinching, scratching
- q Kicking, pushing, tripping
- q Spitting, biting
- q Damaging/stealing property
- q Throwing objects at someone
- q Hiding/taking belongings
- q Hands and feet used aggressively

Verbal

- q Teasing/name calling
- q Making offensive remarks
- q Threatening someone
- q Insubordination to staff members e.g. not complying to requests or directions from a staff member

Use of offensive language to staff warrants an automatic yellow card

Emotional/Social

- q Intentionally excluding someone
- q Involvement in a racist incident
- q Spreading rumours
- q Making fun of someone
- q Stopping people from befriending someone

Comments:

Date and Time the class teacher was informed:

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Signatures:

Teacher issuing card: _____ **Principal:** _____

Child: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent: _____ **Date:** _____

1st YELLOW CARD

Child's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Class: _____ **Class Teacher:** _____

has received 2 incident sheets.

Please arrange a meeting with the Class Teacher.

Please bring this form with you to the meeting.

To be filled out at the meeting:

Comments:

Conclusion/Action

Signatures:

Child's: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent's/Guardian's: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal: _____ **Date:** _____

2ND YELLOW CARD

Child's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Class: _____ **Class Teacher:** _____

has received a further 2 incident sheets.

Please arrange a meeting with the Principal and Class Teacher.

Please bring this form with you to the meeting.

To be filled out at the meeting:

Comments:

Conclusion/Action

Signatures:

Child's: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent's/Guardian's: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal: _____ **Date:** _____



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APPEALS APPLICATION FORM

This form should be used for the making of an appeal to the

*Secretary General
of the
Department of Education & Science*

(as provided for under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998)

If the appeal is in relation to a vocational school or a community college, this form should not be used. Forms for appeals to a VEC should be obtained directly from the school or VEC concerned.

**IN GENERAL APPEALS MUST BE MADE WITHIN 42
DAYS OF RECEIPT OF THE BOARD OF
MANAGEMENT'S DECISION**

APPEAL APPLICATION

An appeal can only be taken by a **Parent**, or a student who has reached the age of 18 years.

(PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK PRINT)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

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HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER:

**DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER:
(IF DIFFERENT TO ABOVE)**

MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER:

NAME OF STUDENT (If under 18 years of age):

DATE OF BIRTH:

YEAR/CLASS OF STUDENT:

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE APPEAL IS MADE:

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**HAS YOUR CHILD ANY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS REQUIREMENT?
IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:**

| |
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| |

NATURE OF DECISION: (Please tick one category only)

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Refusal to enrol | |
| Suspension * | |
| Permanent exclusion/Expulsion | |

** Please note that an appeal may only be made in respect of a suspension which results in 20 days or more of suspension for that student in any one school year*

Appendix E

DATE WHEN YOU WERE NOTIFIED OF THE DECISION BY THE SCHOOL:

| DAY | | MONTH | | YEAR | | | |
|-----|--|-------|--|------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | |

DETAILS OF PROCEEDINGS AT LOCAL LEVEL:

Please give details below of any appeal or review proceedings that have taken place at local level in this case, either to the Board of Management, the school patron or, in the case of a VEC school, the VEC.

Please state the outcome of these proceedings.

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(Extra pages may be added)

GROUND ON WHICH THE DECISION IS BEING APPEALED:

Please state clearly the grounds on which the decision is being appealed.

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(Extra pages may be added)

PLEASE ENCLOSE COPY OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECISION, IF AVAILABLE.

IF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT DECISION IS NOT AVAILABLE, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY NOT.

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |

**PLEASE ENCLOSE COPIES OF ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SCHOOL IN
RELATION TO THIS MATTER**

**YOU MAY ALSO ENCLOSE ANY OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT
OF YOUR CASE.**

I certify that the information given above is true. I understand and authorise that all documentation considered relevant may be accessed as part of this appeal process, and that contact may be made for this purpose with relevant bodies such as the National Educational Psychological Service. In making this application I consent to the disclosure of information in relation to this application by the Appeals Administration Unit to the National Educational Welfare Board and/or the National Council for Special Education. I understand that all documentation provided by me in relation to this appeal, including this application form will be released to the school in question prior to an appeals hearing taking place and may be made available to the National Educational Welfare Board and/or the National Council for Special Education.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please return completed application form to:

**Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit
c/o Department of Education and Science
Cornamaddy, Athlone
Co. Westmeath
Tel: (0906) 483600**

**OFFICE MAY BE CONTACTED:
Monday to Friday, 10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. & 2.30 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.**

If the appeal is in relation to a vocational school or a community college, this form should not be used. Forms for appeals to a VEC should be obtained directly from the school or VEC concerned.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WHEN SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION FORM YOU SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IN QUESTION OF THE APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SCIENCE, AND THE GROUNDS ON WHICH IT IS MADE. A COMPLETED COPY OF THIS FORM MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

DATE OF RECEIPT:

FILE REF: