

Thomond Primary School

Code of Behaviour

1. Introduction

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of Thomond Primary School has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its pupils, staff and parents.

The Code of Behaviour of Thomond Primary has been developed in accordance with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008. It has also been developed in line with the School Anti-Bullying Policy, Supervision Policy, Acceptable Usage Policy and Substance Use Policy.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school.
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour.
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards.
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from this school.
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil.
6. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

2. Policy Formulation

In formulating this policy, the Board of Management completed the following steps

- i. Staff met to discuss the review and completed a questionnaire of the school's strengths in term of behaviour management, what needed to improve and what supports they needed to achieve this.
- ii. Staff attended Promoting Positive Behaviour and Behaviour management sessions (CPD) with NEPS in Incredible Years and with the NCSE. This provided opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and that help students to change behaviour
- iii. Staff was provided with time and opportunities to engage in work on the code of behaviour in Focus Groups.
- iv. Focus Group comprising of pupils from 2nd to 6th class discussed school rules and consequences to misbehaviours and this information was fed back to the focus group.
- v. Staff Focus Group fed back to main staff and a draft policy was created.
- vi. Draft Policy was made available to the TPS Parents Council and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code.
- vii. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available in the school and on the school website and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe. Parents/guardians were offered ample time to make submissions online or in writing.
- viii. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour will be reviewed and where appropriate amended in line with the feedback received.
- ix. The finalised draft will be discussed and ratified by the TPS Board of Management.
- x. The finalised draft of the policy will be submitted for the Patron's Approval.

3. Aims & Objectives of the Code

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

4. Whole School Approach

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

5. Standards of Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults. Please see list of school rules attached for expected behaviours for class, general school, yard and school outings/activities. (See Appendix 1,2 &3)

Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults. Vulgar and abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Pupils are required to walk within the school building. At home time they will walk in an orderly fashion to the school gate.
- Show respect for the property of the school, of other children and their own belongings.
- Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Notes of explanation are required from a parent/guardian for the following instances:
 - If a child is absent from school.
 - If a child needs to leave during school hours.
 - If homework is not complete or not done.
- Do his/her best in school and for homework. They should strive to reach the highest standard in their school and homework.
- The use of mobile phones is strictly forbidden.

- Listen to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking.
- Work to the best of his/her ability.
- Value school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- Follow the direction of his teacher.
- Obtain his/her teachers' permission to leave the classroom.
- Respect the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

General behaviour rules apply in the morning when teachers are supervising Breakfast Café (8.15-8.45am) and yard from 8.30 – 8.45am

Playground Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Walk to and from the yard in an orderly fashion.
- Line up in an orderly fashion when the bell rings.
- Play safely avoiding any games or play that is rough or dangerous.
- Follow the directions of the playground supervisors.
- Play in their designated area of the yard.
- Always remain on school grounds. Pupils are not allowed off the yard or outside the school yard gate at any time.
- Obtain permission before re-entering the school building during break periods. Pupils are expected to use the toilet before yard break and will only be allowed back into school if deemed necessary by supervising teacher.
- Respect the yard supervisor and fellow pupils.
- Avoid swearing, threatening behaviour, fighting or name calling.
- General behaviour and classroom rules apply also at break time.
- On wet days when pupils remain indoors, classroom rules apply.
- In the morning, football or any ball games are not permitted.

It is the policy of this school that the pupils will go to school yard when it is not raining. If it rains while they are on the yard, pupils will line up as normal before re-entering the school.

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow general behaviour and classroom rules during these activities.
- Always follow his/her teacher's directions.
- Always remain with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils.
- Behave politely towards those they meet on such trips.
- Observe the rules of general good behaviour.

6. Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own classroom. They will.

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of each school year and again at the beginning of each term.
- Regularly remind the children of this code during the school year.
- In consultation with the students, classroom rules will be devised by each class, which reflect the values of the general school rules.
- Establish, discuss and display playground rules and these will be discussed at assembly at the beginning of each term or as the need arises.
- Ensure that there is always an appropriate level of supervision.
- Encourage self- discipline and promote positive behaviour.
- In following the principles of Incredible Years Programme, special attention will be paid to modelling and labelling pro-social behaviours.

7. Parents/Guardians

Methods of Communicating with Parents

As parents/guardians are recognised as active partners in the education process, they play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the class teacher or refer to the Parental Complaints Procedure Policy.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour, parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school, including celebrations of good behaviour
- School Facebook Page and School Website- thomondps.ie
- Home visits from the Home School Community Liaison Teacher and HSCL organised parent activities in the school

8. Promoting Positive Behaviour

As per the principles of the Incredible Years Classroom Management Training, the school will employ the following strategies in promoting desirable behaviour.

- Acknowledge that the quality of relationships between teachers and students is a powerful influence on behaviour in school. Particular emphasis is placed on building positive relationships with students, especially at the beginning of the academic year.
- Acknowledge that the skill of the teacher in managing the routine engagement with students is a critical factor in preventing problems. Therefore, emphasis is on proactive strategies in the classroom and the yard.
- Praise and encouragement as a means of affirming positive behaviour.
- Acknowledge the value of pro-social behaviour and this will be labelled and affirmed.
- Ignoring and redirecting as a strategy for dealing with low level inappropriate behaviour.
- Routinely use incentive and reward schemes on individual, group and whole school basis.

9. 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 and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will always be considered. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

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.

10. Inappropriate Behaviour

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive and that general school/class behaviour rules should be referred to.

- Failure to prepare for class as defined and agreed by class teachers and pupils
- Disturbing the work of others

- Refusal to do work in class
- Inappropriate language, attitude and demeanour
- Refusal to follow class/school/yard rules
- Running in corridors
- Refusal to cooperate with staff requests
- Disrespect for school property or the property of staff and other pupils

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at Level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Visual reminders
- Verbal reminder
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Highlight positive behaviour in the class
- Proximal praise
- Incredible Years Proactive Strategies
- Warning system
- Time out
- Loss of privileges
- Temporary separation from peers
- Natural/Logical consequences related to the incident
- Time Out from yard for incidences that occur on yard/morning café
- Time Out from yard if their class related TO is not completed
- Behaviour Contract
- Parent Meeting/Phone call
- Referral to Principal

If behaviour does not improve, the child's parents/guardians are called in.

A behaviour contract, which is devised by class teacher in association with the pupil and parent/guardian will be agreed. This contract will be discussed with the pupil on a weekly basis until there are acceptable behavioural improvements in line with school expectations.

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom based interventions such as circle time, SPHE activities
- Incredible Years Proactive strategies
- Discuss behaviour with child
- Restorative Practice /Conferencing
- Use of homework journal to provide parents/guardians with frequent updates on pupil's progress
- Informal Notes regarding incident/intervention/date
- Resource support for identified needs

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well-being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- **Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.**
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting).
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing.
- Use of a mobile phone in school (Mobile phones may be allowed in school by parental request but must be handed to the teacher @8.45am each day)
- Use of abusive and vulgar language.
- Threatening gestures/demeanour towards staff and pupils
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin.
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult or other pupil.
- Leaving classroom without permission
- Leaving school grounds without permission

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 may be administered by the Principal, and could include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- Immediate Time Out in class/yard
- Principal/Deputy Principal informed immediately
- Detention after school
- Loss of privileges
- Communication with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Report submitted to the Board of Management. (if necessary)
- In-school suspension for one to five days, depending on the severity of the behaviour.
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the behaviour.
- Implementation of a personalised behaviour management plan. This plan will be drawn up and agreed by the parent/guardian, class teacher, other involved staff, principal and the pupil.

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Meeting to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Principal.
- Restorative Practice sessions
- On-going implementation and monitoring of behaviour plan.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Parent Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for Assessment of Need

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- **Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.**
- Setting fires.
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.).
- Smoking on school premises or having cigarettes/matches in their possession
- Possession or use of illegal substances on school premises
- Intentional possession or use of weapons.
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others.
- Bullying of another pupil (including cyber bullying)
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve automatic suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document.

Level 3 responses:

- Official meeting with parents/guardians, Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will take place in the instance of a level 3 behaviour.
- In-school Suspension from school for one to five days:
This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.
- Suspension from school for one to five days:

This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- Suspension from school for five to ten days:
This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.
- Expulsion: Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

11. Procedures for Suspensions & Expulsions

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour, or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

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 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, their 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 may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

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

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of **Thomond Primary School** has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an 'Immediate Suspension' to the Principal Teacher. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation, the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of **Thomond Primary School**, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff.

Or

- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. The student will be removed calmly and safely from his class/yard and will be supervised by resource teacher in a quiet resource room until his parents/guardians collect him/her.

Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any contractual commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s 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.

11. Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Definition of Expulsion:

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

Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply.

a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s).

i. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.

ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond.

b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

i. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.

ii. Ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.

iii. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s).

c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing.

i. As to the date, location and time of the hearing.

ii. Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.

iii. That they may, if they so choose, be accompanied at the hearing.

iv. The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

i. The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures.

ii. The principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence.

iii. Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party.

iv. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose.

d) Board of Management Deliberations & 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

i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.

ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.

iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted.

iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer.

v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of **Thomond Primary School** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Roles and responsibilities

Boards of Management, Principals, teachers, other school staff, parents and students have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school. Behaviour Management will be on the agenda of every staff and BOM meeting.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed and amended, where necessary.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Thomond Primary School ratified this plan on **10th March 2020**

This plan is available to view at the school by the parents, it is also published on our school website; www.thomondps.ie.

Signed: **Canon Donal McNamara**

Date: **10th March 2020**

Chairperson of the Board of Management