

# **Code of Behaviour Policy**

## **Introductory Statement**

The Code of Behaviour for St Tola's School was reviewed during the school year 2009/2010. It was agreed our existing school Code of Behaviour needed to be updated in line with the National Educational Welfare Board 'Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools'. The policy was formulated by a committee of school staff in consultation with staff, students, parents and the Board of Management. A team work approach to this policy was adopted in consultation with all members of the school community.

A draft code was prepared by the committee and then given to all staff and a committee consisting of two representatives from the Board of Management (one of whom was the Chairperson), two parents from the parent's association and the Principal and a teacher's representative for their input. This policy was updated in December 2021.

## **Rationale**

We considered necessary to review our Code of Behaviour during this school year:

- As it was an area of concern identified by the school community
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- To ensure the Code for the school meets the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000
- To ensure the policy is in line with legal requirements and good practice as set out in the NEWB Guidelines

## **Relationship to the Characteristic spirit of the school**

We seek to ensure that our school Code of Behaviour will work in harmony with our school's philosophy and ethos. Our school mission statement states:

### **Aims:**

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- 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 wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To assist 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.

## **Content of policy:**

## **1. Guidelines for behaviour in our school**

### **Standards of behaviour**

#### **The standards of behaviour set out:**

- the expectations for pupils, staff and parents and how they will treat each other.
- the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning.

The adults in this school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour in their dealings both with the students and with each other, as their example is a powerful source of learning for students.

The standards of behaviour expected from all members of the school community (pupils, staff, parents/guardians) are:

- respect for self and other
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

Standards which signal unacceptable behaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Inappropriate and unacceptable use of mobile phone or internet that impacts on our positive school climate and atmosphere
- Damage to property
- Theft

### **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

#### **Pupils**

##### ***General Behaviour***

Each pupil is expected to:

- be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- do his/her best both in school and for homework
- follow school rules
- adhere to guidelines in the School Covid -19 plan

##### ***Classroom Behaviour***

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen - to the teacher/SNA 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/her teacher/SNA/ visiting teacher
- Ask - his/her teachers/SNAs permission to leave the classroom
- respect - the teacher, SNA other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

## **Playground (Playing Fields) Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- remain – on school grounds at all times
- obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- avoid – using derogatory language, fighting, name calling, bullying or excluding others

## ***Behaviour in other School Areas***

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk – in the school corridors etc.
- keep the school and playgrounds litter free and use appropriate recycling bins provided

## ***Behaviour during School Outings/Activities***

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow – his/her teacher's directions at all times
- remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- observe – the rules of general good behaviour as well as school rules and regulations

## **Responsibilities of 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 class.

They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage and acknowledge self-discipline and positive Behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

## **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians 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
- ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.
- Co-operating with the school Covid-19 plan

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. Parents/guardians are expected and required to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.

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

Parents will be required to sign that they have read and accepted the Code of Behaviour on enrolment of their child in our school

# **Our School Rules - Pupils' Responsibilities**

## **For my own safety and that of others-**

- I walk through the yard coming to and from school and always walk in the school building
- On wet days I follow the direction of the class teacher/SNA and there is no running or rough play in the classroom
- I must bring a note of explanation following absences
- I must not leave the school grounds without the permission of the supervising teacher/SNA
- I should not put myself or others in danger and I will not take part in rough play
- For my safety the jewellery I am allowed to wear are stud earrings and a watch, and I am not allowed to wear make up to school
- I should not have a mobile phone in school unless I have written permission from parents and it must be powered off during school time
- I do not bring toys or electronic devices to school unless at the discretion of the teacher

## **School Rules: Caring for Myself**

- I should respect myself and take responsibility for my belongings and keep my school bag, books, copies and uniform in good order
- I will try my best to be in school before class begins
- I will try my best to be neat and tidy coming to school and be proud to wear my school uniform and on the days agreed by my class teacher I wear the school tracksuit. School uniform is a grey jumper/ grey pants or skirt or pinafore with a skirt worn to the knees, a blue polo shirt or shirt, the school tie and a pair of flat shoes.
- I will try my best to bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework to the best of my ability.

## **School Rules: Caring for Others**

- I should be kind and respectful to teachers / SNA s and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining quiet in my class line.
- I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn
- I should keep my school clean by bringing wrappers home, by recycling for our green schools and by making sure that I do not drop litter on the school grounds.
- I should be truthful and honest at all times
- I should always include other pupils in all our games and activities.
- I should apologise when I am in the wrong.

**The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school trips, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games.**

## **Playground Rules:**

The rules for the playground are:

- Respect yourself and treat all children, SNAs, teachers and visitors to the school with respect

- Use the main school entrance for entering and exiting the play areas
- Ask an SNA or teacher on yard duty for permission to go to the toilet
- Use the toilets beside the Principal's office for 1st to 6th classes
- Keep the playground a safe place to play
- Be kind and gentle to one another - name calling and rough play are not allowed
- Stay in our class play area
- Follow the directions of the SNAs and teachers while on the yard

### **Classroom Rules**

The class rules will be devised by each class teacher at the beginning of the school year in consultation with the children. The rules will be based on the standards of behaviour in the classroom outlined in the code and will be taught to the class and displayed in each classroom.

### **Students with special educational needs**

- Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's 'Code of Behaviour' but teachers will use their professional judgment in relation to regularity and level of sanctions.
- Pupils with Special Educational needs will have the Code of Behaviour explained to them in an appropriate manner.
- While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of misdemeanors, they will also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties.
- Parents of children with Special Educational Needs will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child to follow the Code of Behaviour. This may involve working and co-operating with a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.
- The school has compiled a folder of behavioural checklists which may be used with individual students who require extra support to comply with the Code of Behaviour  
A transition plan for changing class level at the end of the school year will be put in place for children with learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties

### **Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**

Promoting positive behaviour is the main aim of the code. An understanding of the factors that influence behaviour is fundamental to successfully implementing our code of behaviour. Learning, relationships and behaviour are inextricably linked. Good behaviour is an outcome of effective learning and good relationships, as well as an influence on how students learn.

### **The following strategies are used to promote good behaviour in our school:**

- There are good relationships between teachers, parents and pupils and a happy school atmosphere.
- Agreed 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 down after break times, noise level for pair/group work. etc.

- Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children. Each class will agree five to seven rules stated in terms of observable behaviours.
- Teachers use a **classroom management plan** to promote positive behaviour. This includes the class rules as mentioned above, the agreed reward system and the consequences that apply when a child fails to adhere to the rules.
- Parents are welcome in our school and staff consult with them where necessary.
- We acknowledge positive behaviour with a note in the homework journal, by praising children on their behaviour and by rewarding them (see below).
- Teachers ensure that the class timetable is as varied as possible and present a balanced and interesting educational programme for the pupils.
- Teachers and other staff are punctual at all assembly times.
- Children are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur clear, consistent consequences.
- SPHE is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem and respect and care for others and self
- Agreed yard rules are in place for the playground which are understood by all. Supervision arrangements are in place, including arrangements for wet days, pupils using the toilets and pupils who become ill or injured.

### **Approaches to Rewards and Praise**

Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results. Our approach to rewards and praise, which have been drawn up in consultation with teachers, children, and parents include the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A positive note in the child's journal
- Stickers, smiley faces, ink-stamps and/or stars on pupils work
- Points on the behaviour chart used in class
- Being given a job to do by the class teacher
- A standard homework voucher is given
- Golden Time (?)/ Show and Tell
- Extra time allocated to pupils favourite activities
- Student of the week award
- Sit with best friend for a period of time
- Special area of yard reserved for a period of time
- Class trophy for positive behaviour
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- A special mention/reward for a whole class
- Lucky Dip
- Special Class treats – golden-time; raffle; extra break/PE; watch a DVD; Homework passes;
- Special mention at Cruinniú

**This list is not exhaustive. Teachers use their discretion as to which rewards to use depending on the children in their class.**

### **On the school yard**

- Stickers on the school yard (for infants)
- Principal is made aware of positive behaviour on the school yard and a quiet word is had to pupils
- Good news note about the yard sent home for whole school/class

### **Responding to inappropriate behaviour**

An understanding of the factors that influence behaviour is fundamental to developing and implementing the school's code of behaviour. Staff are familiar with the factors that influence behaviour in the guidelines, and staff will consider reasons why particular behaviour has emerged and is ongoing. These will be taken into account when planning intervention and support to encourage a child to modify behaviour. The list below is an indication of what the school considers to be minor and serious misbehaviour, although it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of misdemeanour's. We have divided misbehaviours in three levels. The level or seriousness of the behaviour will be determined by the teaching staff and /or principal.

### **Level One**

#### ***Level 1: Behaviours***

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly teaching and 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.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers e.g. forgetting books, failure to do or complete homework without adequate explanation, arriving consistently late
- Running in the school building
- Persistent talking in class
- Leaving seat in class without permission
- Failure to wear the correct uniform
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests
- Littering in the classroom/school building/school yard
- Excluding others

#### ***Level 1: Disciplinary Actions***

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

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour

- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others (this may be in the classroom or if it warrants working in another supervised classroom for a short period of time)
- Loss of privileges (miss out on some time at addition non-curricular activities)
- Parent contact via note in journal or phonecall as appropriate
- Behaviour contract

## ***Level 1 Supportive Interventions***

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Open Circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.
- Use of behaviour tracker to monitor persistent misbehaviours
- If a child misbehaves on the yard, they are given a verbal warning and told the required behaviour. If the behaviour persists the incident will be recorded in the yardbook by the teacher or SNA on yard duty. The child will miss 20 minutes of playtime and will be supervised in the halla for the duration of this time. A note will be sent home to parents informing them of the incident. If a child receives three notes in a month, the parents are requested to meet with the principal to discuss strategies to help the child improve their behaviour in the yard.

## **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
- Leaving school premises during the school day without appropriate permission. This can include leaving the classroom without permission
- Intentional behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of disrespectful language
- Negative reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult in the school (teachers, SNAs, other staff, visitors to the school)

Possession or use of dangerous or potentially dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, sharp objects, etc.)

### ***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 are administered by the Class teacher's, and/or Principal/Deputy Principal, and may include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder

- Fill in reflection template on behaviour and parents and principal sign
- Temporary supervised separation from peers
- Note/phone call from Principal/Deputy Principal to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Loss of privileges (e.g. miss school outing/fun activity. Parents will be informed if this is the case)
- Write a note of apology if this is deemed necessary
- In school supervised detention at lunchtime
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Report submitted to the Board of Management by the Principal
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour
- Implementation of extensive Behaviour management plan

### ***Level 2: Supportive Interventions***

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Individual behaviour tracker chart
- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the 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.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan.

### **Level Three**

#### ***Level 3: Behaviours***

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal wellbeing 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**

- Deliberately putting self and /or other pupils/staff/visitors to the school at risk of serious injury
- Repeated instances of seriously threatening language and/or behaviour towards other pupils/staff/visitors to the school
- Serious misuse of mobile phones or other electronic media to include bullying
- Bringing illegal substances to school
- Intentional serious damage to school property or setting files
- Intentional possession or use of weapons or items used as a weapon
- Intentionally causing physical harm to other pupils/staff/visitors to the school

- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions towards another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin

### **Level 3: Disciplinary Actions**

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve 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:

- **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. A report will be submitted to the Board of Management. The principal, with the permission of the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request assistance from external agency (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service)

- **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.

## **3. Suspensions**

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff will have *reviewed the reasons why these have not worked*. *Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour.* The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

## **Procedures for Suspension & Expulsions**

The Principal, staff and board of management of St. Tola's N. S. will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Education Welfare Board

These procedures are outlined below:

### **Suspension**

#### **Definition of Suspension**

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

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

#### **Authority to Suspend:**

The Board of Management of St. Tola's National 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 not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retain 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 reach either 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 '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.

An Automatic Suspension is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of St. Tola's N.S. 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
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

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.

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 not circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/Guardians being notified. 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:

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

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed **no later than 2 school days** after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s) / guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss :-

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of St. Tola's N.S acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given :-

No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

### **Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions :**

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of St. Tola's N.S will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

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 suspension.
- 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 before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of St. Tola's N.S 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.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision.

The letter will confirm :

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

Where a pupil has been suspended for six or more days in a school year, the National Education Welfare Board will be informed.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to **twenty** days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 or the

Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

## **EXPULSION**

### **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.

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board.

### **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 facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply :

- I. **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.
  
- II. **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 even 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)/guardian(s) 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).

### **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.

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
  - V. Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the hearing
  - VI. Where the Board of Management, having considered all of the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board:-
    - a) Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
    - b) 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.
    - c) Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that they Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
    - d) Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Educational Welfare Officer
    - e) 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.
- f) 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 Science under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of management of St. Tola's N.S 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
- 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.

## **Notification of a Child's Absence from School**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence.

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school. In the case of a prolonged absence, the parent/guardian should notify the school as soon as possible.
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified in writing on the school absence form provided for this purpose
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason should be provided
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. Absences longer than 10 school days should be certified).

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register.

## **Records**

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's behaviour. Such records will contain :-

- Incidents of misbehaviour
- Interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or referral to other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanction imposed, and the reasons they are imposed

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection Amendment Act 2003.

This plan has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.