



RCN No:20113285

Dunderrow National School

Roll No: 169400

Dunderrow, Kinsale, Co.Cork, P17 K504. Tel: 021 4774041 e-mail: info@dunderrowns.ie web: www.dunderrowns.ie
Twitter: @DunderrowNS

Principal: Triona Hannon

Deputy Principal: Helen O' Callaghan

Code of Behaviour

The whole school staff undertook a review of the school Code of Behaviour in 2023 and decided that it needed to be updated to reflect the current needs of our school. It was amended again in May 2024 and updated in September 2026.

We felt that this was needed:

- To maintain the high standards of behaviour currently enjoyed in the school
- To provide clarity and continuity re standards of behaviour in the school for new members of the school community – pupils, parents and staff
- To ensure consistency in the way in which behaviour is addressed
- To try to create a balance between supporting the needs of a child and understanding his/her behaviours whilst ensuring that the needs of other children are being met
- To ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and guidelines:

➤ Schools are obliged under Section 23 (1) the Education Welfare Act, 2000, to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. Section 23 (2) states that the code of behaviour shall specify:

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

➤ To fulfil the Statutory requirements for Garda Vetting Circular 0031/2016

➤ To comply with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and post Primary schools Circular 0036/2023

➤ To comply with Guidelines from Children's First Act 2015 and Children's First National Guidance 2017

Introduction

We think it is important, at the outset, to state that a great majority of our pupils are well behaved and thus are a credit to their parents and a pleasure to have in school. All pupils are in need of clear guidelines so that they are responsible in their work and conduct. Where teachers insist, firmly but fairly, on honest effort and commitment from pupils and on high standards of behaviour, there is a greater likelihood they will obtain them. The great majority of parents take their responsibility with regards to standards of behaviour in their children seriously. We need the support of all parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline. Although we accept that there is a need for sanction to register disapproval of misconduct, we hope to lay the emphasis on rewards for good behaviour whenever possible.

Where sanctions are needed they will be used only after every attempt is made to advise and reason with the errant pupil in an effort to educate towards good conduct. Each classroom is an entity in itself under the immediate control of the class teacher. This code does not presume to set our rules for each individual teacher, nor does it dictate how each should affect discipline within the classroom, rather it is an overall guide to the general conduct of our pupils coming and going to school and activities within the school. Our school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. We believe the sanctions outlined in the code are firm, clear and fair to all concerned and when used will help all of our school community to enjoy school life to its fullest.

School Ethos

Dunderrow N.S. is a Catholic ethos school under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork & Ross. We provide a welcoming and safe environment where all pupils are equally respected and valued. Friendship and co-operation are at the heart of our school. We cultivate a positive atmosphere where children are inspired to achieve their full potential. This Code of Behaviour is rooted in our ethos because we understand that if children are to achieve their potential, they need to work in an orderly environment where they feel safe and secure. In devising the Code, we are seeking to maintain such an environment.

Aims:

- To ensure that the children can access a high standard of education, which is their right.
- To provide a safe and happy environment throughout the school.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To respect the right of pupils to be educated in a disruption-free environment.
- To create an orderly environment in which all pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To ensure that the school community adopts a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
- To cultivate a sense of respect for all in the school and those in authority.
- To develop a sense of respect for school property and the property of others.
- To enable the child to develop as a social being through interacting and cooperating with others.
- To provide guidance in regard to behavioural expectations.
- To assist 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.

- To recognise that every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

This Policy should read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy (reviewed annually)
- Child Protection Policy (reviewed annually)
- Strategy for School Attendance (currently under review 2024)
- Anti cyber bullying policy (reviewed in 2024)

and Appendices that are attached to this policy:

- Appendix 1: Managing Behaviours of Concern (April 2024)
- Appendix 2: Managing Behaviours of Concern in Autism classes (April 2024)
- Appendix 3: Managing Behaviours of Concern in the Mainstream setting. (April 2024)
- Appendix 4: Manual handling of pupils (April 2024)
- Appendix 5: Copy of Pupil agreement page that is signed each September by children from 3rd-6th class.

Content of Policy

1. Whole school approach to managing behaviour
 - Rights and responsibilities of the school community
2. School rules
 - Whole school rules
 - Playground rules
 - Classroom rules
3. Strategies for managing behaviour
 - Positive Strategies for managing good behaviour
 - Strategies for managing and preventing misbehaviour
 - Restorative Practice
4. Misdemeanours
 - Minor
 - Serious
 - Gross
5. Suspension / Expulsion
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion
 - Appeals
6. Keeping records
 - Class
 - Playground
 - School
7. Absences

Whole School Approach to Managing Behaviour

Managing behaviour requires the support and co-operation of the whole school community, particularly staff, pupils and parents. The Board of Management has the overall responsibility for ensuring

- that the Code of Behaviour is drawn up
- that it is in line with the ethos of the school
- that it respects the needs and rights of pupils, staff and parents
- that it is upheld by pupils, staff and parents

The day to day implementation of the Code of Behaviour rests with the pupils, staff and parents and each of these groups has rights and responsibilities in the management of good behaviour.

Pupils

- Pupils are involved in the Code of Behaviour through the development of class rules and general school rules.
- Co operating with the Code of Behaviour in their school life.
- Reading, discussing and signing the Code of Behaviour along with their parent(s)/ guardian(s). **Pupils sign the code of behaviour page annually from 3rd class to 6th.** This

record is kept in the child's classroom file. It has links to healthy eating policy, internet usage and dress code policy.

- Students Council was created in September 2022 and this provides student voice in relation to the Code of Behaviour.

Pupil rights

- To be educated and to learn in a disruption free classroom
- To be treated fairly, consistently and with respect
- To have their individual differences recognised and provision to be made for these differences
- To be listened to and to ask questions, at appropriate times
- To have their positive behaviour affirmed and their misbehaviour addressed appropriately

Pupil responsibilities *(This section will be put into the 1st-6th class pupil journal)*

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To stay on school premises and within designated areas during school times
- Follow school and class rules
- To work quietly and safely, to the best of their ability
- To listen to their teachers and to act on instructions and advice
- To listen to other pupils and to wait their turn to speak
- To show respect for all members of the school community
- To respect the rights of other pupils to learn
- To care for their own property and to respect all school property and property of other pupils
- To avoid behaving in a way, which would endanger themselves or others
- To avoid nasty remarks, swearing or name calling
- To include other pupils in games and activities
- To contribute to good order in the school, by moving quietly around the school and by keeping the school clean and tidy
- To bring the correct materials and books to school
- To follow school and class rules and procedures
- To do their homework to the best of their ability

Staff

Teacher, SNA and Secretary rights

- To be treated with respect and dignity by pupils, parents, colleagues and all members of the school community.
- To be able to teach in a safe, well-maintained environment, free from disruption and aggression.
- To have the support and cooperation of all staff, colleagues, parents and Board of Management, in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the school.
- To work in an atmosphere which encourages professional development.

Teacher responsibilities *(some of these points also apply to SNAs and Secretary)*

- To support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour consistently and for the duration of the academic year
- To be punctual each day so that they can create a warm, safe, welcoming environment for each pupil. Staff are required to be in school at 8.50am and in their classrooms by 9am to receive their pupils.
- To develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil

- To facilitate each pupil to reach their full academic potential, by recognising and providing the individual talents and differences among the pupils
 - To teach a varied and stimulating curriculum which will engage children's interest. The curriculum will include SPHE which will teach children communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills thus supporting the school's Code of Behaviour
 - To use classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
 - To be courteous, consistent and fair, while keeping opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum and addressing misbehaviour appropriately
 - To listen, at appropriate times, to pupils' explanations for behaviour
 - To provide support for colleagues
 - To apply the techniques of restorative practice when appropriate
 - To use their professional judgement, to decide when it is necessary to communicate with parents and to provide reports on matters of mutual concern
 - To keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated misbehaviour
- (Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS)

Parent/ guardian rights

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of cooperation among staff and between staff, pupils and parent(s) / guardian(s).

School-Parent co-operation is very important.

The School's Code of Behaviour is available on www.dunderrowns.ie and parents/guardians are asked to tick this box that they have read it, on the Enrolment registration form when their child begins their education at Dunderrow NS. From 3rd class onwards, pupils and parents are asked to sign that they have read this policy, among others, annually. This record is kept in the child's classroom file.

- To be treated with respect
- To have a safe and welcoming environment provided for their child
- To expect that there will be a recognition of the individual differences among pupils
- To expect that there will be fairness and consistency in the way the pupils are treated
- To communicate with teachers/principal by appointment on matters of mutual interest or concern
- To expect contact at an early stage to discuss difficulties and/or problems
- To receive regular progress reports and information on the school's policies and procedures
- To involve the Parents' Association in the drafting of this policy
- To be made aware of the school's code of behaviour and to appeal decisions in accordance with agreed procedures

Parent/ guardian responsibilities

- To encourage pupils to have a sense of respect for themselves and others, for their property and that of others
- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- To show interest in their child's education by ensuring their child has the correct books and materials and by signing homework notebooks and reading records
- To support the school in the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. It is a condition of enrolment in the school that parents agree to comply with the school's Code of Behaviour (Education Welfare Act 2000 section 23, 4)

- To cooperate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- To communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress/ behaviour
- All communication should be in a spirit of courtesy and co-operation with the teacher/principal

Dunderrow N.S. School Rules

General School Rules

- A respectful attitude between pupils, teachers, staff members and visitors to the school is expected. A general courteous and mannerly attitude is anticipated when addressing or being addressed by a teacher or staff member.
- Pupils are expected to work diligently in school, co-operate fully with teachers and complete all homework assigned to them.
- All property must be respected, and damages must be replaced. The school is not responsible for personal belongings left behind by pupils.
- Children are expected to be punctual. Official school hours are 9.00 a.m. – 2.40 p.m. – outside of those hours children are the responsibility of their parents unless while on school-organised activities. Infant class hours are 9.00 a.m. – 1.40 p.m.
- All children must wear the correct school uniform to school. (See Dress Code Policy)
- A child cannot leave the school without permission. A note from a parent/guardian is required following absences (through the school app). Pupils are not allowed out on the road during school hours (unless with the express permission of a teacher).
- Parents of the junior classes (Infants to 2nd) are requested to meet their children at the gate – not at the car. Children awaiting buses will embark/disembark at the designated bus area. Children from 3rd class upwards can walk/cycle home if they live nearby.
- No running, boisterous behaviour, barging or shouting is allowed in the school building.
- No physical or verbal bullying shall be tolerated.
- Children are not allowed to use bad language or make racist or abusive comments.
- No fighting or spitting is allowed.
- The children should remain seated at all times unless the teacher has directed otherwise
- Mobile phones are not allowed in school.
- Chewing gum, fizzy drinks, crisps etc is not allowed in school. (See Healthy Eating Policy)
- The school Healthy Eating Policy must be adhered to except on special occasions
- Neither the school nor the staff can assume any responsibility for children's behaviour outside of school hours.

Rules of Conduct for the Playground at Dunderrow NS

- Children must respect the rights of others to feel safe by refraining from rough play.
- Children must respond quickly and positively to any request from the staff on duty
- Classes must keep to their defined play areas.
- Children should play with equipment appropriately and safely and tidy up all equipment at the end of break.
- When the bell rings children walk to their lines/areas immediately in a quiet and orderly fashion.
- Children are only allowed back into the school during lunch if they need to go to the toilet or if they are sick. They must always ask for permission to leave the yard.

Rules of Conduct for the Classroom at Dunderrow NS

- When we come into school we sit in our place.
- We walk in the school.
- We always complete our homework.
- We have good manners.
- We do what the teacher asks.
- We show respect.
- We do our best.

Individual teachers may make codes for their classrooms in order to interpret these rules appropriately for the age and stage of the children in the class.

School timetable

Staff are required to be at school by 8.50am.

Pupils may arrive 8.50-9.00am and the bell rings at 9am

Junior and Senior Infants classes end at 1.40pm

1st-6th classes end at 2.40pm

All staff and pupils are expected to be punctual.

Parents/guardians are reminded that the school does not accept any responsibility for pupils before 8.50am and after 2.50pm each school day, except where pupils are engaged in an extracurricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management.

Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with the Code of Behaviour policy during these times.

Strategies for Managing Good Behaviour

Positive strategies for Managing Good Behaviour

Our school policy is designed to promote good behaviour, rather than merely deter bad behaviour. In promoting positive behaviour we aim to establish a climate where praise and encouragement far outweigh the frequency of criticism and sanctions. The teachers work together to develop routines to ensure the smooth running of classroom learning and to ensure the safety of the children while moving around the school. Each teacher, using the classroom rules, develops a clear set of expectations with his/her class and is consistent and in his/her approach to managing behaviour. Pupils' input is important in devising class rules. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave. Each teacher has the responsibility to develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil, and in this regard, praising desirable behaviour is essential. Restorative practices are used throughout the school. We praise and reward children for good behaviour in a variety of ways:

- Teachers congratulate children - either publicly or privately, being sensitive to the age and personality of the pupil
- Affirming comments and smiley faces on pupil's work
- Stickers, badges or stamps in books
- Personal sticker charts
- Time on computer or other special activities, work displayed, homework pass, buddy pass
- Class Dojo and weekly group prizes
- A visit to another teacher/ principal for praise

- Informing parents through oral or written communication
- Golden time
- Star charts/Reward charts – grouped
- Class Dojo
- Traffic lights system
- Student of the week/ Star of the Week award
- Assembly
- Marble jars
- Cushions

We also try to reward classes to foster a co-operative behaviour. Such rewards include:

- Extra free time
- Extra Golden Time
- Extra PE/games
- Extra play time
- Class reward
- Reduced homework on agreed nights.

The reward schemes are constantly monitored to evaluate their effectiveness in promoting positive behaviour or in reducing misbehaviour. The rewards should be closely linked in time to the behaviour being rewarded, focussing on effort and not just achievement. Rewards should avoid unhelpful competition and be seen as attainable by all. The rewards should be tailored to suit the age group of the pupils in the classroom.

Managing behaviour

A fundamental part of the management of behaviour in each class is that children are taught the curriculum in a stimulating manner using a variety of methodologies and differentiated, where appropriate, to meet their needs. Children are kept engaged and busy as much as possible. From the beginning of the year, teachers ensure that children understand the class rules and the expectations that the teacher has around these rules.

Teachers may use the following strategies to manage the minor misdemeanours that can happen in a classroom:

- Ignore the behaviour
- Remove the cause of the behaviour if possible
- Non-verbal signs such as a warning look, a change in tone of voice or stopping speaking and waiting for attention
- Moving to stand in the vicinity of the pupil
- Overlooking/ ignoring behaviour while praising the pupil demonstrating the appropriate behaviour
- Moving the pupil to a quiet spot to work
- Regular reminders and class discussions about the class rules
- Establishment of clear class and school routines to minimise opportunities for misbehaviour
- Loss of class reward/Getting a tick or signature

When misbehaviour is in the yard, the teacher/SNA on duty can use the following strategies

- Moving to stand in the vicinity of the pupil
- Speaking to the pupil
- Giving the pupil a time-out in the yard

The following strategies may also be used when appropriate

- Completing incomplete tasks as extra homework during the week and at weekends, or during golden time
- Loss of privileges and/or classroom jobs

- Logical consequences — e.g. move to the back of the line for inappropriate behaviour in the line
- Transcription exercise/Extra written work
- Write an account of their behaviour
- Write a 'sorry' note
- Detention during break, in the hall, under supervision.

In the event the above strategies do not work, the following steps will be followed:

1. Verbal warning
2. Reasoning with the pupil (What did you do? What rule did you break? How can you fix it?)
3. Loss of star/loss of class reward/receiving class sanction
4. Written warning - the teacher records the name and behaviour in class record/day book/diary
5. Time out within the classroom
6. Time out in another room
7. Loss of a minor privilege – Golden time, football training etc.
8. A note home to parents in homework notebook
9. Loss of a major privilege – outing, tour, class play etc.
10. The teacher requests a meeting with parents if there has been no improvement in behaviour
11. Individual behaviour plan, in consultation with parents is drawn up
12. The principal requests a meeting with parents if there has been no improvement in behaviour
13. Suspension if there is no improvement following the meeting with the principal (Rule 130(5) for Primary Schools)
14. Expulsion (Rule 130(6) for Primary Schools)

Managing Homework Issues (Please consult Homework policy for more detail)

1. Note/Verbal from teacher outlining incomplete work and telling pupil to catch up.
2. If homework is not complete on a subsequent day, a note from the teacher in the homework notebook to be signed by the parent.
3. If the problem persists, pupils will be asked to complete homework during school at a time of teacher's choosing.
4. Parents will be informed at all points and may be called to a meeting if non-completion of homework continues or recurs.
5. If homework issues continue, pupils will miss an upcoming event or trip, at teacher's discretion.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour (Please see our Behaviours of Concern Policy)

- Children who have difficulty regulating emotions are referred for psychological assessment.
- Appropriate support is sought from services available
- Professional development is available to staff.
- In the event that a pupil has to be physically restrained the teacher will follow the guidelines in our Physical Intervention Policy.
- Parents will need to be contacted to remove their child in the event that a behaviour becomes unmanageable or a danger to themselves or others.
- The B.O.M. grants permission for the principal teacher or class teacher to record conversation or inappropriate behaviour. The B.O.M. has permission to investigate matters that occur inside or outside the school which may bring the good name of the school into disrepute.
- The B.O.M. reserves the right to request parents to pay for damage to property caused by their children.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practices in our school provide a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Staff upskilled in the delivery of this practice. (Nov 2021- March 2024)

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions:

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Misdemeanours

The misbehaviour of pupils is divided into three categories:

1. Minor Misdemeanours
2. Serious Misdemeanours
3. Gross Misdemeanours

The degree of misdemeanour i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the Teachers and/ or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours as follows:

Minor Misdemeanours

- Speaking out of turn
- Littering
- Behaving in a manner which distracts other pupils and prevents them from learning
- Eating during class
- Breaking the class rules
- Misbehaviour in the line and when moving around the school
- Incomplete/no homework without a note from a parent
- Making inappropriate remarks
- Telling lies
- Lack of attention while instructions are being given
- Rough play in the classroom and playground
- Being rude
- Being mean to other children
- Being late for school
- Being in the wrong yard without permission
- Having chewing gum in school
- Not lining up properly at appropriate times

Appropriate strategies as listed in Managing Behaviour will be used to deal with these.

Serious Misdemeanours

- Repeated incidences of minor misbehaviour
- Refusal to listen to staff and to follow instructions given by staff members/coaches etc.
- Inappropriate questioning and answering back to members of the school community
- Bullying
- Leaving the classroom and/ or school premises without permission
- Stealing, defacing or destroying other pupils' belongings or school property
- Acting aggressively or with violence towards any member of the school community
- Directing insolent or abusive language at any members of the school community
- Constant no homework
- Failure to perform tasks set as punishment
- Continuous disruptive behaviour in class
- Fighting, kicking, punching, spitting in school-yard
- Use of physical and/or verbal intimidation towards peers/staff members
- Mocking other pupils
- Making remarks of a racist nature
- Using a mobile phone, smart watches(or any device that enables videoing/ accessing information online) during the course of the school day that is an inappropriate use of technology within the school
- Stealing

Sanctions for Serious Misdemeanours

1. Loss of a minor privilege – Golden time, football training etc.
2. A note home to parents in homework notebook
3. Loss of a major privilege – outing, tour, class play etc.
4. The teacher requests a meeting with parents if there has been no improvement in behaviour
5. Individual behaviour plan, in consultation with parents
6. The principal requests a meeting with parents if there has been no improvement in behaviour
7. Meeting with BOM and parents 8. Suspension if there is no improvement following the meeting with the principal (Rule 130(5) for Primary Schools)

**** Please be advised that some steps may be bypassed at the discretion of the Principal depending on the seriousness of the misdemeanour (s) that may have occurred.**

Gross Misdemeanours-Please See our Behaviours of Concern Policy

- Serious, deliberate vandalism of school buildings or property
- Serious physical assault of a Staff member or any member of the school community
- Carrying, or having used, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, vapes or any dangerous/banned substances
- Carrying anything deemed to be a weapon – blade, penknife etc.
- Continuous serious misdemeanours

Sanctions for Gross Misdemeanours

- Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents / guardian.
- Expulsion will be considered if deemed necessary by Chairperson / Principal Note

In all cases above – misdemeanours and sanctions – the lists should not be seen as exclusive. The Board retains the right to include other behaviours which may not be listed but which may, nonetheless, be contrary to the behaviour expected in the school. Equally other sanctions, not listed here, may be used, particularly at the suggestion of parents.

Suspension/ Expulsion

Suspension

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as

- The pupil has engaged in repeated instances of minor misbehaviour and there has been no improvement.
- The pupil's behaviour has had a serious 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.

A single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. Serious misbehaviour is defined as any behaviour or acts that would endanger the health and safety of others in the school and/or are in violation of the law.

Suspension allows staff and the pupil time to reflect and gives the staff an opportunity to plan ways to help the pupil change unacceptable behaviour. Students will not be suspended for longer than three days, unless more time is needed to fulfil a particular objective to assist the student.

Suspension is defined as follows: '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 Dunderrow N.S. has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an Immediate Suspension to the Principal Teacher, in consultation with the Chairperson. 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 well-being of pupils or staff of the school.

An Automatic Suspension is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Dunderrow 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/coaches/visitors to school
- Acts of 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. Formal written notification of the suspension will be issued 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

- 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).
- Any further consequences/sanctions

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 recurrence of such misconduct.
- Consequences of the action which lead to the suspension

The Board of Management of Dunderrow 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 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) containing:

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour
- Details of the impending investigation process
- Notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- 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.
- Consequences and sanctions

We acknowledge the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are 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, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- 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 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 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

Expulsion

In extreme cases and when all possible avenues of discussion, negotiation and mediation open to us have been exhausted, as a last resort it may be deemed necessary for the Board of Management to expel a pupil from the school in accordance with Section 23 of the Educational Welfare Act, 2000.

Prior to this, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour, such as

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways to help the student change his/ her behaviour.

- Ensure the student understands the consequences of their behaviour, if it persists.
- Ensuring all other possible options have been tried.
- Seek the assistance of support agencies, such as the N.E.P.S, H.S.E. Community Services, Student and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Behavioural Support Services and National Council for Special Education, if appropriate

The decision to expel a student requires serious grounds such as

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

While these are similar to the grounds for suspension, factors such as persistence and seriousness of the behaviour as well as a belief the school has exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour will influence the decision of the Board to expel a student.

Definition of Expulsion:

‘A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/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 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):

- details of the alleged misbehaviour
- details of the impending investigation process
- notification that the allegation could result in expulsion
- 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:

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of:
 - the allegations against the student
 - the investigation
 - written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)

c) 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

- as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- 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:

- the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- 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

- Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion
- 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
- Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Educational Welfare Officer
- 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 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 Dunderrow N.S. acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are 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, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- 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.

Appealing Suspension/Expulsion

Parents have the right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, a decision to expel or a decision to suspend where cumulative suspensions reach or exceed 20 days in any school year. The full details of the procedures to be followed can be found in the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour, section 11 p 70 - 78 [http://www.newb.ie/codes of behaviour guidelines/download guidelines.asp](http://www.newb.ie/codes%20of%20behaviour%20guidelines/download%20guidelines.asp)

Record-keeping

A standardised record sheet will be used to track an individual pupil's behaviour, when teachers feel that a child is moving from regular minor misdemeanours to regular serious misdemeanours. 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 sanctions imposed, and the reasons they were imposed
- Pupils and parents will be told when a record is being made about behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

Teachers may also keep records on children to monitor behaviour. When a child is sent to the Principal for a serious misdemeanour she will record any accounts of the misdemeanour, from the pupil and from others who may be involved.

Communication with Parents

When it comes to behaviour, parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. Communication will be verbal or written, depending on the circumstances. The staff is willing to meet parents at any mutually agreeable time to discuss any concerns. One aim of the code of behaviour is to provide a clear, consistent method of communication between home and school to inform the parents about their children's behaviour in school.

In situations where there is evidence of serious ongoing emotional and behavioural difficulties, teachers will work with parents/guardians to have their student referred for assessment by the relevant services.

Evaluation

The success of this Code of Behaviour Policy will be measured through:

- Maintaining or improving the current good behaviour levels in the school
- Fostering happy, confident, well-adjusted children
- Positive feedback from teachers and parents and others involved with the pupils in the school

Implementation/Ratification and Review

The Code of Behaviour has been drawn up by the whole school staff (Nov 2023- March 2024) It has been presented to representatives of the Parents Association for consultation and input. Following this consultation process it is being presented to the Board of Management. If ratified, it will become school policy thereafter and will be published on the school website. It will also

be flagged to parents of new entrants at an induction day to take place before the end of the current school year.

The school principal and staff will be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the policy. Any feedback received will be recorded and any problems that arise will be taken into account for the purposes of evaluation and review.

Ratification of policy for Dunderrow N.S.

Chairperson 

Principal 

Date 14/09/26

References: Developing Codes of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools (NEWB)

Appendix 1

Managing Behaviours of Concern

Introduction

This policy stems from Dunderrow National School's commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment for children with special educational needs. This policy is designed to ensure the rights of children with special educational needs and the staff who support them, so that everyone can learn, work, flourish and develop in an environment that is positive, respectful, safe and inclusive. It should read as part of the Code of Behaviour policy and in conjunction with Modifying Behaviours in the Autism class and Modifying Behaviours in the Mainstream classes.

Promoting positive behaviour and preventing and managing challenging behaviour is vital to ensuring the safety of all children, staff and families. As a staff, we believe that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. As a school community, we will always endeavour to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building positive relationships with the pupils.

In Dunderrow NS we believe that children react well to rules, routines and boundaries. In order for rules and routines to be effective, we feel that continuity and consistency are of the utmost importance.

Definition of Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are often defined as "Culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary community facilities" (Emerson, 1995).

In our school, behaviours of concern are those behaviours that interfere with the child's learning and/or that of others. These behaviours can be triggered by a wide variety of factors and influences, such as being a new pupil in the school, transitioning to a new teacher, or by other external events in their lives.

Children are encouraged and guided to develop respect for themselves, other children and all adults with whom they come in contact with.

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour is defined as the manner of conducting oneself. It also reflects one's response to one's environment or stimuli. Behaviour may be conscious or unconscious (e.g. quickly pulling one's hand away when one touches something hot). Many factors may contribute to a child's particular behaviour.

Internal factors include:

- age and stage of development
- personality and temperament
- personal history and experience
- physical, sensory or medical factors
- skills, ability to learn
- beliefs about self and others
- resilience and self-efficacy

External and interpersonal factors include:

- parental and family patterns and relationships
- social networks - friends and peer groups

- neighbourhood and community factors
- the status and standing of different groups in society
- school factors
- time, opportunity and support for personal and social development

6 KEY ASSUMPTIONS IN UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

Ref: Daly, Patricia. (2019) *Small changes can make big differences*, Limerick: CDU

● **Behaviour is not random:** It is connected to events which occurred before the behaviour and is reinforced, positively or negatively, by reactions to the behaviour. It is therefore controllable in terms of interventions targeted at antecedents, or “triggers” and consequences

● **Behaviour works, has meaning and is not random:** It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise. The functions of behaviour which negatively affect learning are:

- o Getting attention, from adults or peers
- o Getting an object – something the child wants e.g. a ball, a chase
- o Avoiding something e.g. attention or a particular task
- o Getting or Avoiding a sensory experience or human contact

● **Children want approval:** Adult approval, particularly affirmation and approval from key adults such as teachers, is as important to children as the air they breathe. Your approval is the strongest reward you have in the classroom

● **Children want to learn:** This has been demonstrated time and again, both in scientific and psychological studies, and is borne out by the experience of teachers over the years. Some may have particular difficulties with the learning process, but they all want to learn

● **Children who know “what” and “how” cannot always “do”:** It takes a while for children to fully know, understand and apply social interactive skills. Not all children grasp them easily and they need to be taught and supported

● **Some behaviour has hidden dimensions:** These are related to a particular child’s unique life experience. We see what happens in the classroom and in the playground but we cannot see the child’s unique history or underlying “invisible” conditions e.g. anxieties, sensory difficulties or learning difficulties. We should always be aware of this, especially with children who display challenging behaviour.

INFLUENCES ON PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

There are many potential influences on student behaviour, and many factors that can lead to behaviour that is challenging for schools to deal with. These include:

- Biophysical factors: such as medical conditions or disabilities
- Psychological factors: including emotional trauma or lack of social skills
- Behavioural/social factors: including where a student’s problem behaviour has been learned through reinforcement, consequences or adaptation to social practices (a student with a learning difficulty repeatedly misbehaves knowing that he/she will be removed from the class and this will avoid his/her learning difficulty being exposed)
- Student group dynamics: such as bullying and teasing, cliques or student apathy or hostility
- Environmental factors: e.g. the level of classroom noise or seating arrangements
- Classroom organisation issues: such as inconsistent routines, inadequate materials or obliviousness to cultural differences
- Teacher behaviour: e.g. boring or disorganised lessons, over-reaction to misbehaviour or over-reliance on punishment.

In many cases, there is no single “cause” of challenging behaviour, but it is the result of several factors and influences operating in combination.

BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

The following behaviours where excessive and infringing on the rights of others are not acceptable:

Aggressive behaviour: pinching, biting, scratching, punching, slapping, pushing, pulling, kicking, head butting, pulling hair, using objects against people and themselves.

Non-compliance: lying down, non- cooperation, resistance to teaching, refusing to do things.

Disruptive or threatening behaviour: shouting, screaming, swearing, repetitive vocalisation, verbal abuse, remarks/discrimination, curses, gestures or threats to harm, teasing, arguing, interrupting, obstructing, taking food or drink from others, setting off the fire alarm, invading personal space.

Absconding / Flight risk: wandering outside the classroom without permission, running away or trying to run away.

Attention seeking: constantly misbehaving in order to seek attention.

Sexually inappropriate behaviour: inappropriate sexual language or sexual gestures including inappropriate comments about the sexuality of others.

Destruction of property: damage to property belonging to self, other children or adults or damage to school property.

Socially- inappropriate behaviour: spitting, interrupting others, provoking others, making inappropriate comments.

Temper tantrums: outbursts of bad temper, emotional reaction

Self-injurious behaviour: head banging, scratching, biting and poking.

Passive challenging behaviour: glaring, refusing to respond, averting gaze, withdrawal.

It is very difficult to list all possible misbehaviours and eventualities. However, we expect the children to behave in a manner which does not compromise the safety, wellbeing and education of themselves or others.

Positive parental input is paramount in ensuring that the children are supported and encouraged to respect and abide by our values and school rules. We look forward to full co-operation in these matters.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication.

Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate which is supportive of positive behaviour. In Dunderrow NS, we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour.

The following are some of the strategies that have been developed throughout our school for pupils with SEN to promote positive behaviour:

- Developing language and communication skills – eg: PECS, Lámh,
- The use of visual cues to reinforce verbal instructions
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- Visual schedules
- Reward systems
- Choice boards
- Individual behavioural plans
- Regular communication with parents –email, daily journal
- Teaching of social skills
- Use of social scripts(stories)

- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child (if capable)
- Restorative Practice
- TacPac: to help regulate and calm the pupils, it is also offered as a defusing tool.

STAFF TRAINING

In Dunderrow NS we promote Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers to develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. The school staff have availed of Restorative Practice (2021 Online & 2024 face to face) facilitated by Oide. As a school will continue to explore further CPD in Restorative Practice

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Teachers will be responsible for:

Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students. This includes communication with the student's parents/guardians as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage co-operation.

- Implementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour.
- The creation of Behaviour Management Plans where needed.
- Participating in professional development that contributes to skill development in the pupils and a clearer understanding of students with challenging behaviour.
- Documenting all challenging behaviour incidents as they occur. Incident reports will be written when needed.
- Reporting all challenging behaviour and incidents to the principal and parents/ guardians.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:

- Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal in relation to concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Providing suggestions which could assist in the development of Behavioural Support Plans and Individual Educational Plans.
- Cooperating with interventions and behavioural strategies that are proposed by the child's teacher and the principal.
- Working co-operatively with the school with the best interest of the child at heart.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the Code of Behaviour Policy' within the school.
- Leading the school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students.
- Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour as deemed appropriate by the principal.
- Providing the opportunities for specialised teachers within the school to develop higher level skills so they can provide additional support and advice within the school.
- Seeking outside support and advice, such as: support from our NEPS psychologist and the NCSE in relation to behavioural supports for pupils with SEN.
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted e.g. reduced day, suspension, expulsion (as a last resort).
- Health and Safety: In the event that a pupil poses a risk to themselves or others, they will be removed from their class or setting to ensure their safety and the safety of others. If this is not possible, the other children will be removed. If the threat to safety persists, the child's parents/guardians will be asked to take the child home.

Sanctions (in line with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy)

Minor challenging behaviour:

- Will be discussed with the child (Restorative Practice)
- Will be dealt with at class level and privileges will be withdrawn as appropriate.
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students.

Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour – the parents may be asked to

take the child home.

- Will be dealt with appropriately.

Damage to property:

- Child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- Will be reported to class teacher.
- Will be reported to parents/guardians and the parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. The parents may be asked to take the child home. - A written/verbal apology will be given by the child/parent to the owner of the property.

Aggressive behaviour – threats:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss the child's behaviour and appropriate sanctions may be put in place.

Aggressive behaviour – assaults/ Serious challenging behaviour:

Where there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to specific behavioural problems, the school should endeavour to raise concerns with parents/guardians sensitively and to give families as much support as possible. Referrals will be made by the Principal with the support of the parent/guardian

The following steps will be taken when serious or gross misbehaviour is persistent. These steps are in accordance with the Department of Education & Skills guidelines and Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools:

- Communication by Principal with parents/guardians – verbal or in writing
- Meeting between Principal and parents/guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed
- Parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend school to meet the Principal
- Parents/guardians must endeavour to support their child and school to comply with rules and aim to give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future. On failing this, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupils or pupils parents/guardians
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services

The School's Capacity to meet the needs of the child

The school will discuss with the parents the needs of the child and the ability of the child to adapt to the school setting.

Some children will exhibit behaviours of concern arising from distress or anxiety due to their inability to cope with what they perceive to be the overwhelming experience of being in a mainstream classroom. In such cases, it is important that both parents and school recognise children in such situations can respond by displaying behaviours of concern as a coping mechanism. Parents should be aware that such behaviours, where they are aggressive or violent, will often frighten other children and cause further social isolation.

The school will discuss with the parents what learning or social needs the child may have in relation to attending school.

The school will seek and receive full co-operation from the parents in relation to how the school will work with them and their child to meet his/her needs.

The school will analyse all relevant data pertaining to the child's behavioural issues so that the school can begin to understand the reasons why the child is behaving as s/he does.

The school will make the parents aware of the role of NCSE and the SENO and ask for all relevant data which might assist the school in seeking the required resources from NCSE or DES in relation to their child. The school will also work with parents to design and teach the child alternative and more socially acceptable responses/behaviours for the child. These new responses or behaviours will promote better acceptance by peers and a stronger, positive relationship with teachers.

Reduced School Day

Circular 0047/2021 was issued to schools, as Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools, which came into effect from January 1st 2022. They can be accessed here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63545-the-use-of-reduced-school-days>

In the context of challenging behaviour, reduced school days should only ever be considered in very limited and time-bound circumstances. It is acknowledged that a reduced school day may be helpful in exceptional circumstances as part of a transition or reintegration intervention, based on the needs of individual students. Any such arrangement should be short term and transitional, and designed to assist the student to attend for the full school day along with his/her peers.

- Where in exceptional circumstances schools are placing a student on a reduced school day, the school authorities:
 - Must have previously engaged with the relevant support services and professionals, including the special educational needs organiser (SENO) where appropriate, and have developed and implemented a student support plan for an appropriate period of time.
 - Have clear evidence-based reasons for considering a reduced school day as a relevant and appropriate intervention with the best interests of the student at the core of the decision.
 - Have the written consent of the parents/guardians of the student, and must also document if parental consent is subsequently withdrawn.
 - Shall notify Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) of the decision to place a student on a reduced school day no later than the first day of the commencement of each episode of a reduced school day.
 - Should notify the NCSE/SENO of the decision to place the student on a reduced school day where the student has special educational needs.
 - Should formulate and agree a plan for the reduced school day intervention which will specify the following: start, review and end dates; any educational supports or interventions to be provided for the student during the period of the reduced school day; the actions required to support the student's return to school and reintegration to a full-time school day.
 - The plan with respect to the reduced school day intervention and return to school will have regard to any relevant medical reports or other relevant information held in the student's support file. The intervention and return to school plan must be discussed and agreed in collaboration with the parent/guardian.
 - Ideally, the period for which the student is on a reduced school day, should not exceed six school weeks. A reduced school day cannot be carried forward from one academic year to the next.
 - Must include in the plan of action outlined above, the name of a contact person in the school with whom the parents/guardians may communicate with, and, where appropriate, any work plan for the time during which the student will not be in attendance at the school.
 - Shall provide the parents/guardians with a copy of the agreed plan, signed by parents/guardians and the school principal, and retain a copy which must be given to the Educational Welfare Officer or a member of the DE Inspectorate if requested. A copy should also be retained on the student support file. Should consider a graduated regime of school attendance which increases steadily and incrementally towards full attendance.
 - Shall submit a new notification form to TESS when the period during which the student has been on a reduced school day is extended no later than the first day of renewal of the plan.
 - Shall keep a record of all instances of students being placed on a reduced school day and access to this list should be made available to TESS educational welfare officers and the Department of Education Inspectorate if requested.
 - Shall inform the parents/guardians of their right to withdraw consent at any time.
 - Should inform the parents/guardians that TESS educational welfare officer can provide assistance and advice if required. TESS will provide support and guidance to both parents and schools in relation to the use of a reduced school day.

Suspension Examples of grounds for suspension:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety to themselves and others in the school community.
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- the student is responsible for a single incident of serious misconduct. After other interventions are tried and reasons why these have not worked are reviewed, the decision to suspend a student can be made. This decision will be made by the Board of Management. Each case will be looked at individually taking into account the child's circumstances. A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Expulsion Examples of grounds for expulsion:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property. Expulsion will only be considered when the Board of Management have tried a series of other interventions and believes all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted. There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence (for instance, a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students).

When expulsion is considered, the following steps will be taken:

- 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 decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the National Education Welfare Board has received notification in writing
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the student absence report form.

Methods of communicating with parents/guardians

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to working with children. Parents/guardians and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians are being established and will be reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher.
- A written report will be made on the incident and recorded in the Incident folder.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the principal.
- Each incident will be reported to parents/guardians.
- If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed and the Behaviour Management Plan will be reviewed after each incident.
- If the behaviour persists, parents will be invited into the school to attend a meeting with the teacher and the principal and appropriate sanctions may be put in place- this may be that the child is sent home or put on a reduced school day.
- In the event of the situation not improving, the child will be suspended by the Principal. (The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed).
- Further serious infringements may warrant longer suspensions. (The Chairperson of the BOM will be informed)
- If no improvement is made the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management for consideration and a decision as to what actions should be taken.
- Continuous disruptions and/or violent behaviour may result in expulsion of the pupil. This will be considered where the student's behaviour is causing persistent and significant disruption to the learning, safety and wellbeing of themselves or others.
- When the child has had six day's suspension, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- For suspensions lasting more than three days, in exceptional circumstances, the matter will be monitored by the Chairperson of the BOM, in consultation with the principal.
- If a decision is made in relation to expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their rights according to Section 29 of the Education Act and a copy of the application form to appeal the decision will be forwarded to the parents/guardians.

Limitations

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour but to serve as a general guide to the students, the staff and the Principal. This policy should be used to assist in dealing with difficult situations.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members of Dunderrow NS must adhere to the 'Code of Behaviour Policy'. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff adhere to this policy.

Policy Review/Ratification

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Code of Behaviour Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education and/or DES guidelines may require this document to be modified.

Policy ratified in April 2024, to be reviewed in April 2026.

Appendix 2

Modifying Behaviours in the Autism Classes

Introduction

There are many strategies which the teacher and SNAs employ in the autism class to deal with potential challenging behaviour before it escalates. Where deemed necessary, children have an Individual Behaviour Support plan (IBP). This IBP will be discussed with the parents and all staff involved and will be regularly reviewed.

Communication

When promoting positive behaviour or experiencing challenging behaviour from the children, clear communication is important. The following strategies should be taken into consideration to support the child's self-regulation:

1. Short, clear and simple language
2. Use of LÁMH, supported by verbal communication
3. Use of visual supports
4. Avoid reference to the behaviour that just occurred
5. Distract and re-direct the child to focus their attention back to the tasks in hand

Behaviours Promoting positive behaviour

The following is a list of strategies used in the autism classes to modify behaviours. Although this list is not exhaustive, some of the strategies used include:

1. Remind the child of the classroom rules. These are displayed using good choice / bad choice visuals in the classroom.
2. Remind the child of their reward and 'what they are working for'.
3. Use the 'first-then' strategy.
4. Distract and re-direct the child to focus their attention back to the tasks in hand.
5. Use LÁMH to support verbal instructions.
6. Quiet time / Thinking time.
7. Promoting acceptable behaviour through the use of social scripts(stories)

Sensory seeking behaviour

The following is a list of strategies and methodologies used in the autism classes to help the children self-regulate when sensory overload is impacting on their behaviour.

1. Follow prescribed OT programme when given by an Occupational Therapist (if applicable).
2. Breathing exercises.
3. Visit to the multi-sensory room.
4. Movement break.
5. Use gross motor equipment.
6. Access sensory activities to target oral, visual, auditory and tactile input where applicable.

Attention seeking behaviour

On occasions, staff will notice attention seeking behaviour and ignore it. Planned ignoring is a strategy where staff give no outward sign of recognising a behaviour.

- 1) No eye contact
- 2) No verbal response
- 3) No physical response

Planned ignoring is a strategy for a child to learn appropriate ways of gaining attention. However, staff are aware of the behaviour occurring and monitor the child (to ensure their safety and the safety of others when applicable).

Self-Injurious behaviour

When the child displays self-injurious behaviour, they might have no other way of telling staff their needs, wants and feelings. The following strategies will be used and outlined in detail in the child's IBP:

1. Distract and redirect
2. Light physical guidance (for example: provide a pillow between the head and the hard surface)
3. Low arousal approach
4. Remove sensory discomforts (for example: give the child ear defenders to block out loud noises)
5. Reduce demands
6. Guide the child to a safe space/shared spaces to ensure their safety and the safety of others

Recovery

Staff will use a low arousal approach to support the child to return to the classroom / activity. This approach emphasises a range of strategies to restore the relationship between the child and others.

1. **Appear calm:** Relaxing body posture, avoid tensing muscles (such as clenching fists/ folding arms)
2. **Personal space:** Do not crowd the child or stand within his/her personal space for too long as this may increase arousal levels.
3. **Touch:** Some children may be highly sensitive to touch, particularly when in an aroused state, so avoid touching him/her as much as possible.
4. **Removing triggers:** If possible, staff will identify the triggers and remove them from the environment. If not possible, reassure the child by labelling the trigger. e.g. for a stressful noise "It's just a fire engine, it will be gone soon".
5. **Distraction:** Distract and redirect the child to a favourite activity in a quiet/ low arousal environment.
6. **Communication:** use positive language to focus on the transition, *not* the behaviour that has just occurred

***Note:**

The small safe space (most likely our sensory room off the hall) is used as a low arousal area where the child can self-regulate, away from the classroom setting. Staff will monitor and observe the child to ensure their safety.

**The Department of Education and Skills guideline on the design of schools makes reference to "a small safe place". A child may access the space for the protection of themselves, other pupils and the staff. The child must be supervised from inside or outside the room. Pupils will be encouraged to use the room themselves which will allow them to regulate and reduce their behaviour. Use of the safe space should be reviewed to ensure it is having a positive impact on behaviour. The use of seclusion should be documented in the IEP of the child.*

Recording behaviour

Behaviour of the children will be recorded and monitored by staff present. All incidents should be brought to the attention of the class teacher.

1. Low level incidents will be recorded in the child's daily diary.
2. ABC charts will be completed to monitor reoccurring behaviour.
3. Incident reports will be completed when challenging behaviour results in self-injurious behaviour or physical contact towards staff or other children.

Reporting to the principal

Any time an escalation of challenging behaviour occurs, the class teacher will inform the principal. In the absence of the principal, the deputy principal will be informed.

Reporting to parents/guardian:

Any time an escalation of challenging behaviour occurs, it is school policy that it is recorded.

1. Home School Communication document is used to communicate
2. Parents will be telephoned and informed of any escalating behaviours.
3. Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss persistent challenging behaviour.

Requesting clinical support:

The class teacher will contact clinical support if a child's challenging behaviour persists and additional support is needed.

Appendix 3

Modifying Behaviours in the Mainstream Setting

We are aware that some children may need extra supports in relation to their behaviour in the mainstream setting.

We are committed to helping children to modify their behaviour to enable them to engage in learning opportunities and have a positive experience of school. Positive strategies as outlined in our code of behaviour will be utilised in the first instance.

Failing this, the following strategies will be used to encourage pupils to self-regulate and take ownership of their behaviour. Each individual child may require an individualised response which may include.

- A movement break to prevent the behaviour from escalating further
- Quiet time
- Sensory input
- Distract and re-direct
- Breathing and relaxation activities
- Removing triggers

The child will return to class and re-engage in activities when it is evident that the child has self-regulated and is calm.

When it is appropriate to discuss this behaviour with the child, a discussion can take place. The aim of this discussion is to help the child to demonstrate an understanding of their behaviour and to identify strategies to prevent this behaviour in the future.

If a pattern of behaviour is identified, extra supports will be sought to support the child and the teachers. The behaviour will be recorded through using an ABC chart. Supports may be sought from the National Behaviour Support Service (NCSE) & other outside agencies if needed

Appendix 4

Manual Handling of pupils

Introduction:

Dunderrow National School is rural mixed primary school, all on the one floor level. The school is fully developed and caters for nearly two hundred pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth class. Dunderrow N.S. also has one Autism class and will open our second Autism class in Sept 2024. Each of these special classes has six pupils. There are also a number of pupils in our mainstream classes with special needs. From time to time children can pose as a flight risk or as a danger to themselves or others.

Rationale:

The school management recognises the occasional need for teachers or SNAs to lift, move or handle children in the interest of Health and Safety. This can be particularly the case in relation to Junior Infant pupils, particularly at the beginning of the year, or pupils in our special classes.

The following are examples of incidents when the principal, teachers or SNAs may need to intervene physically (intervention will be at a minimum and only used as a necessity for the health, welfare and safety of pupils and staff)

- A child runs towards an exit with the intention of leaving the school
- A child is a physical threat to another child or themselves
- A child is a physical threat to a member of staff
- A child climbs / jumps on an item of furniture and is at risk of injuring himself or another child or a staff member
- A child goes to ground and is a disruptive force in the classroom or the playground
- A child gets stranded on a piece of equipment in the playground, in the classroom, school hall or at a school event and needs assistance to descend
- A child is having difficulty transitioning from one area to another e.g. from the classroom to the school hall or from the school building to the modular build classroom separate to the school building.

In all cases the principal, teacher or SNA must show the utmost care and attempt to protect both him/herself and the pupil.

Appendix 5

Pupil Name: _____

Along with my parents, I have read, talked about and understood these policies:

Healthy eating policy

Dress Code Policy

Code of Behaviour

Internet usage policy

I will sign this every September.

Date	Child's signature

