Code of Behaviour Policy

2026

Introduction

Grangemockler N.S. aims to provide a safe, positive learning environment where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and the Board of Management work in partnership with each other. Each individual is valued and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential.

The school community of parents, staff and Board of Management has a central role to play in the children's social and moral development, just as it does in their academic development. It is our goal to guide and encourage each child towards standards of behaviour which are acceptable and in keeping with a school setting.

As a school community we aim to work together towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of respect, honesty, consideration and responsibility for ourselves and for one another.

Rationale

This policy was formulated by the staff of Grangemockler N.S. in consultation with parents, the Board of Management and pupils, as appropriate. It constitutes a review and update of the existing Code of Behaviour and fulfils the legal requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school.

Section 23(2) of the Act specifies that the Code of Behaviour must state:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school.
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.

5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

This review of the Code of Behaviour ensures that it complies with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (National Education Welfare Board – 2008).

Aims of the Code of Behaviour

- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships with pupils, staff and parents.
- To encourage pupils to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and learning.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils, and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all members of the school community are widely known and understood.
- To help children to mature into responsible, participating adults.

Expected Standards of Behaviour

A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, parents and pupils. Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, children and school.

We have adopted a positive Code of Behaviour with emphasis on guidance and encouragement so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. The Principal has day-to-day responsibility for behaviour. Each teacher has responsibility for maintaining good behaviour and order within his/her classroom, while sharing responsibility for behaviour throughout the school premises.

Special Needs Assistants also play an important role in promoting good behaviour, particularly among pupils they support.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating relevant concerns to the school.

Summary of School Rules for Pupils

I will...

- always do my best.
- have nice manners to my friends, other children and adults.
- keep myself and others safe.
- line up safely when the bell rings.
- show good behaviour in the classroom.

- respect my own belongings and other people's belongings.
- respect my classroom, the school building and grounds by keeping them clean and tidy.
- complete my homework each night.

Pupils should show respect to each other and to all members of staff, parents and visitors, and behave appropriately at all times – in class, in the playground, on school trips, and on the school bus.

Children with Additional Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, Grangemockler N.S. recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special education teacher and/or Principal as appropriate.

Cognitive, emotional and social development will always be taken into account. Where appropriate, consultation may take place with outside agencies such as NEPS, NCSE and the HSE through the SENO. Professional advice from psychological assessments will also be considered.

Class peers may be taught strategies to assist and support a pupil with additional needs in following school rules. This will always be done in a respectful and supportive way.

Promoting Good Behaviour

Promoting positive behaviour plays a central part in our Code of Behaviour. Pupils are more likely to benefit from their education and be happy in a structured, caring environment, where high standards of behaviour are expected and upheld.

At Grangemockler N.S., we recognise that the quality of relationships between pupils and teachers is one of the strongest influences on pupil behaviour. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened

to by adults in the school. Praise will be given generously and directed at behaviour (not the child), e.g. "Well done, you lined up safely after break" instead of "You're a great girl/boy."

Examples of Positive Reinforcement

- Verbal acknowledgement of effort or good behaviour.
- Positive comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- A visit to another staff member or the Principal to acknowledge good behaviour.
- Reporting positive behaviour to parents (verbal/written, e.g. a "sunny note").
- Reward such as a star, merit sticker, or homework pass.
- Delegating special responsibility or privilege.
- Extra 'Golden Time' for the class or individual pupil.
- Student of the week

Other Strategies at Class and School Level

- Behaviour plans and contracts.
- Reward charts.
- Class marble jars.
- Token Folders
- Beehive
- Student of the Week
- Involving pupils in creating class rules.

- Modelling good behaviour.
- Tactical ignoring of minor negative behaviour.
- Encouraging children to say sorry and try again.
- Reflective sheets (see Appendix 1).
- Fostering good home-school communication.
- Health Promoting School initiatives.
- Curricular programmes such as SPHE (Stay Safe, RSE, Walk Tall, Webwise), Religion (Grow in Love), and initiatives such as *Friends for Life*, *Zippy's Friends* and *Friendship Week*.

The Traffic Light Behaviour System

To support positive behaviour in a clear and consistent way across the school, Grangemockler N.S. uses a traffic light system. This approach gives pupils a fair chance to improve their behaviour while also rewarding positive choices.

The Levels

- Green – Positive behaviour: Reward is full Golden Time on Friday.
- [illegible] – Some reminders or misbehaviour: Half Golden Time on Friday.
- Red – Serious or repeated misbehaviour: No Golden Time on Friday.

Key Features

- Weekly review: Pupils' traffic light colour is checked at Friday lunchtime. The colour they are on at this point determines their Golden Time for that week.
- Fresh start: Every Monday, all pupils begin again on green.

- Opportunity to improve: Children can work their way back up to green during the week by making better choices and demonstrating improved behaviour.
- Fair and consistent: The system is applied across all classes, so expectations are clear and consistent throughout the school
- Golden Time alternatives: Pupils who lose part or all of their Golden Time will complete classwork or other written activities under supervision during this period.

Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

Sanctions will always be applied respectfully and fairly, helping students understand consequences and encouraging responsibility for behaviour.

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about behaviour change by helping pupils:

- Learn that certain behaviour is unacceptable.
- Recognise the effect of their actions on others.
- Understand that choices have consequences.
- Take responsibility for their behaviour.

Sanctions also:

- Reinforce school boundaries.
- Protect the wellbeing of other students and staff.
- Maintain a safe and orderly learning environment.

Sanctions and Procedures

1. **Minor Misdemeanours**

Examples include:

- Interrupting class work.
- Misbehaving in line.
- Leaving seat without permission.
- Running indoors.
- Leaving litter.
- Being discourteous/unmannerly.
- Not completing homework without a valid reason.
- Purposely not working to potential.
- Unintentionally endangering self or others.

Teacher responses may include:

- Verbal reprimand/reasoning.
- Note in teacher's records.

If repeated:

- Note to parents via homework journal.
- Separation from peers.
- Loss of privilege/class activity.
- Yard misbehaviour followed up with parents.

- Homework completed at break time.
- Meeting with parents.
- Referral to Principal/Deputy Principal.

2. **Serious Misdemeanours**

Examples:

- Constant disruption.
- Lying.
- Stealing/damaging property.
- Showing disrespect.
- Leaving school without permission.
- Refusal to co-operate.
- Bad language.
- Bringing weapons.
- Deliberately injuring another.

Responses:

- Referral to Principal.
- Note to be signed by parents.
- Meeting with parents.
- Board Chairperson informed.

- Suspension considered.

3. **Gross Misdemeanours**

Examples:

- Deliberate vandalism.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour.
- Setting fire to property.
- Substance abuse.

Responses:

- Immediate suspension sanctioned.
- Expulsion considered in extreme cases.

Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension and expulsion procedures will follow Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act, 2000.

- Suspension may initially last up to 3 days, extended to 10 days by Board decision, with further extensions only in exceptional cases.
- Expulsion may only occur with Patron consent and when alternative school arrangements are in place.
- Parents may apply for reinstatement following suspension with a commitment to improved behaviour.

(See full details in Appendix 1 & 2.)

Implementation

The Code of Behaviour, ratified by the Board of Management, will be circulated to all staff. A paper copy is available in the school office.

All new staff will be given a copy. The policy will be reviewed periodically with feedback from pupils, staff and parents.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 11/2/2026

Signed: _____ Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date of next review: December 2027

Appendix 1 – Suspension

Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools (NEWB, 2008), p.72

Before suspending a student, the Board of Management will consider the following:

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour:

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated despite interventions?

The context of the behaviour:

- Where and when did the misbehaviour occur?
- Were there any triggers or influencing factors?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the pupil?
- Are there relevant personal/home circumstances or special needs?

The impact of the behaviour:

- How have other pupils and staff been affected?
- What has been the impact on teaching and learning?
- Does the pupil understand the effect of their behaviour?

Interventions tried:

- What interventions were tried, and for how long?
- How were interventions recorded and monitored?
- Were parents involved in solving the problem?
- Was NEPS or other professional advice sought?
- Were other supports/agencies involved?

Proportionality of suspension:

- Does the behaviour warrant suspension?

- Is the standard applied the same as that applied to others?

Impact of suspension:

- Will suspension support behaviour change?
- Will it protect other pupils/staff?
- Could it worsen the pupil's vulnerability?

Appendix 2 – Expulsion

Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools (NEWB, 2008), p.72

Before expelling a student, the Board of Management will consider:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- Persistence and escalation of behaviour.
- Context and triggers.
- Developmental stage and individual needs of the student.
- Impact on staff and pupils.
- Interventions tried, and results of those interventions.
- Parent involvement and professional support sought.
- Whether all other interventions have been exhausted.
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response.
- The possible social/educational impact on the pupil.

Appendix 3 – Reflection Sheets

4th – 6th Class – Pupil Reflection Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

What happened?

What were you thinking at the time?

What are your thoughts now?

Who has been affected by what you did?

How were they affected?

What can you do to make things right?

1st - 3rd Class – Pupil Reflection Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

What did I do?

Why did I do it?

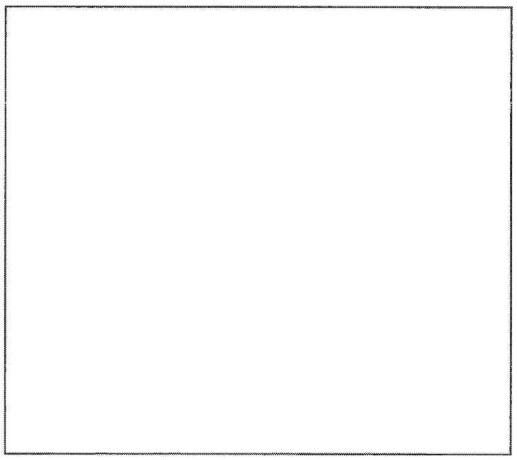
What rule did I break?

How can I fix it?

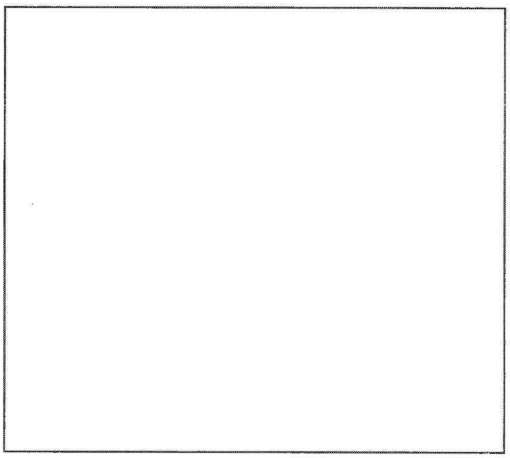
Junior Infants – Senior Infant - Pupil Drawing Reflection Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

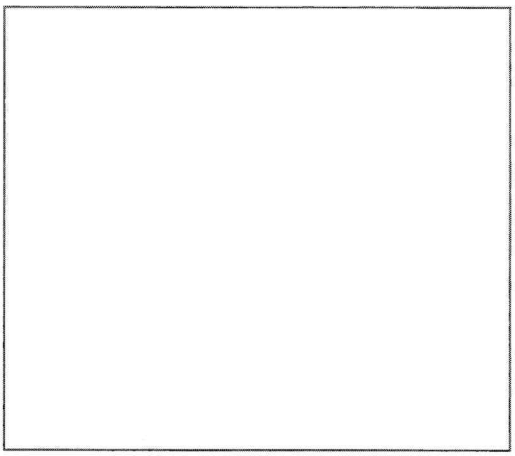
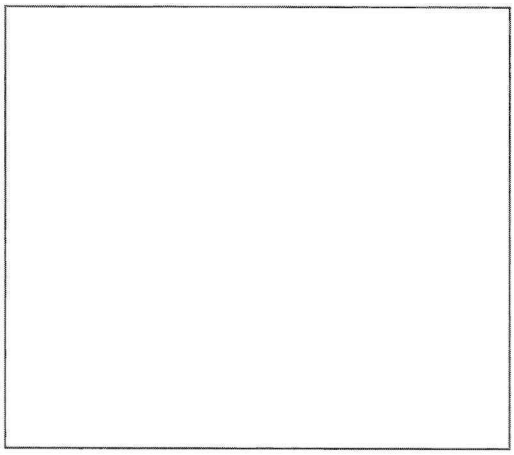
1. What did I do?



2.Why did I do it?



3.What rule did I break?



4.How can I fix it?