

BLESSINGTON EDUCATE TOGETHER CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

RATIONALE

It is a requirement under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 that the Board of Management of a school must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23

(2) 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 may 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; and
- (e.)The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

To support the above the school also must have

- A defined procedure of recording behaviour, specifically failures in observing the standards required

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Dignity in the Workplace statement
- Parental Complaints Procedure

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY IS TO:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- Allow the school to function in an orderly way to support all children in their learning and development.
- Assist staff, parents / guardians and students in understanding the policies, systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to ensure their co-operation in the application of these policies and procedures.
- Ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- Ensure the educational environment is guided by our Educate Together ethos. For Educate Together's ethos, values and charter, see <https://www.educatetogether.ie/about/values/>
- Create an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, open-mindedness and consideration for others.
- Promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate and accept these differences.

Only the Board of Management can authorise any changes to the content of this policy.

WHERE DOES THE POLICY APPLY?

The standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour policy apply in the school and in any situation where the school, has duty of care to the pupils. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

Where a student is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school, a judgement will be made if there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work, before the code of behaviour applies. The school authorities may need to get legal advice on this where the situation is complex.

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1. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR REQUIRED IN OUR SCHOOL

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;

In Blessington Educate Together National School (BETNS) each student is expected to:

- ✓ Be well behaved and to show respect for self and others, and show kindness and willingness to help others.
- ✓ Attend school regularly and punctually.
- ✓ Do his/her best both in school and in homework.
- ✓ Have everything needed for class and to keep his/her personal space and belongings tidy.
- ✓ Show a readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and to show and practice forgiveness.

Our School or Golden Rules are as follows -

- Be Kind
- Be Gentle
- Be Honest
- Work Hard
- Look after Property

Some examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours are shown below:

Positive (Acceptable Behaviour)	Negative (Unacceptable Behaviour)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggressive and intimidating physical behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindness / Willingness to help others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threatening behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respecting staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bullying / Harassment/ Discrimination / Victimisation

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Positive (Acceptable Behaviour)	Negative (Unacceptable Behaviour)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respecting other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class disruption, interfering with teaching or learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courtesy / Good manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncooperative behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive body language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shouting/raising voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bad language/verbal abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberately excluding others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to listen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative peer group pressure that promotes negative behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to seek help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imitation and mocking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular school attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property damage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Personal Hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatening the safety of others or exposing others to (possible) danger and or harm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good sportsmanship 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fairness 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking responsibility for own actions 	

Note: Some behaviour may need to be considered under Children First Act 2015

Promoting positive behaviour

In BETNS we recognise that a positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between students, staff and parents/guardians and the ways in which students, staff and parents/guardians treat each other as per our and Dignity in the Workplace statement.

Co-operation and communication between staff and parents/guardians is actively encouraged through a variety of methods including formal meetings, informal meetings, written communication and information packs.

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COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

Each parent/guardian will be provided with a copy of this Code of Behaviour to discuss with their child/children. Parents/ guardians are accepting the Code of Behaviour policy when they enrol their child in the school.

During the first term a Code of behaviour day will be held in the school. As part of this day, that night's homework will involve both parent/guardian and child reading and discussing aspects of the Code of Behaviour which will be available on the school website or available from the secretary's office upon request. Adults in the school have a responsibility to model the students' standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting students to behave according to these standards. Adults are expected to adhere to all code of behaviour policies including the Dignity at Work statement.

The ways in which parents / guardians and teachers interact with each other will provide students with a model of good respectful relationships.

STAFF

- Treat all students, parents / guardians and other staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Promote positive behaviour throughout the school and do their utmost to create a positive environment.
- Adhere to school policies including the Code of Behaviour and related policies.
- Each teacher is responsible for managing the behaviour in the classroom. As a school we award provincial points and follow Jenny Mosley's Golden Time (see below).
- Encourage students to uphold the schools ethos and Code of Behaviour.
- Encourage students to respect all members of the school community.
- Show a good example to students, especially on the school premises by ensuring their own behaviour is exemplary and does not contravene school rules.
- Make themselves aware of, and cooperate with, the school's system of rewards and sanctions.

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PARENTS / GUARDIANS

The school needs the support of parents/guardians in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.

Parents/guardians are informed about the Code of Behaviour and their part in supporting it, at parent teacher meetings, at curriculum meetings and through information packs.

Parents / guardians will

- Treat all students, staff and other parents / guardians in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Promote positive behaviour throughout the school and do their utmost to create a positive environment.
- Support their children with homework and ensure that it is completed and signed nightly.
- Attend meetings at the school as requested.
- Make themselves aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
- Ensure their children are in school daily and on time.
- Ensure their behaviour is exemplary and does not contravene school rules. Encourage their children and empower their children (in line with developing independent thinking) to:
 - Uphold the schools ethos and Code of Behaviour.
 - Respect all members of the school community.
 - Have the necessary books and materials to complete their schoolwork and take part in school activities.
 - Follow the rules in relation to safe access through the car park, in the school playground and by ensuring that they do not leave the school grounds.

Parents / guardians are encouraged to contact the class teacher if they have concerns about the behaviour of their child. This may be done by making an appointment through the school office.

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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management of BETNS will

- Treat all students, parents / guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Support the Principal and staff of the school in the application of the Code of Behaviour and sanctions used.
- Review the Code of Behaviour on a regular basis and support other reviews of the policy as necessary.
- Facilitate and support the revision and implementation of any updated policy.
- To deal with any issue that comes before the Board of Management in a timely, fair and transparent manner respecting confidentiality.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;

Misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or may pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.

Our policy is to intervene early and positively when student behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

The school will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour.

ENSURE UNDERSTANDING

- Teachers and parents / guardians will ensure that students understand how they are expected to behave.
- The adult members of the school community will understand how they themselves are expected to behave.
- The school will ensure that a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding acceptable behaviour and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour is in place.

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STRATEGIES AND SANCTIONS:

The purpose of sanctions is to bring about a positive change in behaviour by helping students to:

- Learn that their negative behaviour is unacceptable.
- Recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- Understand (in ways appropriate to their age and development) that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- Learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Within BETNS, Jenny Mosley's Golden Time is followed. Each child begins the week with 30 minutes of Golden Time. Pupils may lose Golden Time for breaking a Golden Rule, but can earn Golden Time back by 'turning their behaviour around'. Children who repeatedly and wilfully break Golden Rules will lose an amount of Golden Time. Children may join Golden Time once their lost time has passed. Every child has a safeguarded 5 minutes in order that they get a taste for how special Golden Time can be. Children not partaking in Golden Time will be given work to do.

In situations of serious behaviour Incident sheets will be issued.

Strategies (in no particular order or sequence) used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour by students are:

Informal	Formal (Documented)
• Reminding student (reflection)	• Reprimand (may include a warning)
• Reasoning with the student	• Withdrawal from classroom/yard
• Advising on how to improve	• Communication with parents / guardians - (recorded)
• Encouraging acceptance of their behaviour	• Referral to external support
• Withdrawal from peers e.g. Time out	• Meeting with parents / guardians
• Loss of privileges (Golden time)	• Incident Sheets(Staged Actions)
• Referral to internal support staff	• Suspension (must be brought to attention of BOM)

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Informal	Formal (Documented)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expulsion (must be brought to attention of BOM)

Items in the formal column may be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

Responses to unacceptable behaviour -

1. Initially the teacher, by way of warning and/or advice, will deal with the misbehaviour verbally and may inform the parents. However, if behaviour is more serious, the Principal and parents / guardians will be informed.
2. The teacher will phone home to advise parents / guardians of unacceptable behaviour and or repeated unacceptable behaviour. Should a phone call be unanswered, the school will leave a voicemail requesting the parent/ guardian to return the call at their earliest convenience.
3. Parents / guardians will then be encouraged to work with their child and the school to support their child to follow the code of behaviour.
4. In the case of gross unacceptable behaviour, the Principal, Deputy Principal, class teacher or Special Educational teacher will contact parent / guardian as a matter of urgency. The case may also be referred to the Board of Management for consultation.
5. A meeting between the teacher and parents / guardians will be organised. The Principal/ Deputy Principal may also be present and the child may be included at some stage of the meeting.
6. All parties will work with the school to reach a resolution. The school will keep the parents / guardians informed of any progress / changes in behaviour.
7. The principal will inform the Board of Management of every incidence of gross unacceptable behaviour or repeated unacceptable behaviour.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs.
- Individual Behaviour Management Plans may be needed to help a student with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student.

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- Teachers will take particular care to help a student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of a sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

MANAGING 3RD PARTY CONCERNS

Parents / guardians are encouraged to contact the class teacher if they have concerns about the behaviour of their child. This may be done by making an appointment through the school office.

Recognition is made within the Code of Behaviour for the effect unacceptable behaviour may have on third party individuals and / or groups.

1. If a parent/ guardian has a concern regarding the behaviour of another pupil they should arrange a meeting with the class teacher.
2. Following this, if a parent/ guardian wishes to make an allegation regarding the behaviour of another pupil it must be submitted in writing to the school.
3. On receipt on the allegation, the class teacher will arrange a meeting. Following on from that the class teacher will remain in contact with the parents/guardians to keep them informed of any strategies being used to modify the behaviour and relay any improvements until a resolution has been reached to the satisfaction of all parties.
4. If an allegation is made about a child's behaviour the parents / guardians of the child will be informed by the class teacher.
5. All parties will work with the school to reach a resolution. The school will keep the parents/ guardians informed of any progress / changes in behaviour.

IF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN DOES NOT FEEL THE ISSUE HAS BEEN RESOLVED THEY SHOULD MAKE CONTACT WITH THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT.

MANAGING AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- Parents / guardians and teacher will need to work together to help the student to modify their behaviour and to work towards changing it. This will involve the Principal and other in-school supports.
- External specialised assistance may be required (with the consent of the parent / guardian) for students who display emotional behavioural disturbance in school.

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- In the event of a seriously violent or threatening behaviour that has potential to cause or causes a risk to the safety of the student himself/herself or the safety of other students or staff, steps will be taken to distance the student from the immediate environment of other students and the Principal will be notified immediately.

2. PROMOTING ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Our school's emphasis is on affirming positive behaviour.

Teachers and other school staff use a range of strategies for promoting and rewarding acceptable behaviour at class and school level.

At a school level, the children are divided into four provinces (Leinster, Munster, Connacht and Ulster). Staff award points to children for an array of positive behaviours throughout the week based on the Golden Rules. The Province with the highest score earns additional play time on a Friday. As mentioned above, we utilise Golden Time as a means of motivating children to maintain positive behaviour.

At a class level, teachers and staff use a variety of strategies (for example verbal praise, notes to parents / guardians, visits to the Principal, in-class points systems etc) to reward positive behaviours. The children work with their teachers to create strategies individual to their class.

Being in the Student Council offers children the opportunity to raise school issues and to have a voice in the running of the school. The elected members of the school council meet at least each term with teachers to raise concerns and discuss issues.

These strategies will be communicated to parents / guardians at the curriculum meetings at the beginning of each school year and will be tailored to suit the class needs.

Individual behaviour Plans may be tailored to suit an individual child's needs.

BULLYING

In BETNS bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable.

- Teachers have a professional duty of care to address bullying and the school has an **Anti-Bullying Policy** which includes action to be taken in relation to alleged breaches of the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

3. SUSPENSION / EXPULSION PROCEDURES

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;

The school will follow guidelines as laid out in the *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

SUSPENSION

BETNS will invoke Suspension / Expulsion procedures when required

AUTHORITY

The Board of Management of BETNS has the authority to suspend a student.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried and reviewed before a suspension is considered. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- 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.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The authority to suspend has been delegated by the BOM of BETNS to the Principal for up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the BOM can not be convened in a timely fashion. The principal will inform the BOM of any suspensions at the next Board of Management meeting.

The decision to suspend will follow an investigation into the alleged unacceptable behaviour. The investigation should give an opportunity to the student involved and his / her parents or guardians to have their views heard. Where the immediate safety of others is believed to be compromised a suspension may take place immediately followed by an investigation into events.

A suspension may be considered following continued episodes of unacceptable behaviour or in response to a single incident of serious unacceptable behaviour.

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In cases of immediate suspension the parents / guardians will be contacted immediately and requested to make arrangements to collect the student. In all situations of suspension the parents /guardians will be notified in writing of the details of the suspension. The letter should outline;

- The reasons for the suspension.
- The duration of the suspension should be time limited.
- Arrangements for return to school including any commitments to be entered into by the student on their return to school.

All suspensions over 6 days should be notified to the National Education Welfare Board. Where suspensions exceed 20 days the parents / guardian should be notified of their right to make an appeal to the DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

EXPULSION (PERMANENT EXCLUSION)

The Board of Management has sole authority to expel a student.

The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled are set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion)

BETNS will have made all efforts to resolve issues before considering the expulsion of a student. Where the Principal forms the view based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. Where consideration is being given to expelling a student, parents / guardians will be written to, outlining the grounds on which the expulsion is being considered. The letter will also invite the parents / guardians to attend a Board of Management meeting where the case will be heard, furnish them with any relevant documentation and invite them to put their case before the Board either orally or by written submission or both. All relevant documents will also be furnished to the members of the Board.

At the hearing the Principal and parents / guardians will put their case before the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be given the opportunity to question the evidence of the other party directly. The parents / guardians may also put forward a case for a reduced sanction to be imposed. Both the Principal and parents / guardians should then withdraw from the meeting while the Board consider the case before them and makes their decision.

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The decision of the Board is then communicated to the parents / guardians in writing. If the decision of the Board is to expel the student this decision is notified to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The expulsion cannot take effect until the passing of 20 school days from the date of receipt of this notification by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). If the Board considers it necessary in order to maintain good order and the safety of students in the school it may decide to suspend the student for the 20 day period.

The EWO on receipt of the notification of intention to expel the student must make all reasonable efforts to consult with the Principal, parents / guardians and anyone else that may be of assistance. The EWO will also convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Section 24, Education (Welfare) Act, 2000). The purpose of these consultations is to make provision for the on-going education of the student. These discussions may also give rise to a proposal for an alternative intervention to avoid expulsion. Such a proposal should be brought back to the Board for their consideration.

Where no alternative to expulsion is found, the Board should, after the passing of 20 school days, ratify its decision to expel the student. This decision should be communicated immediately in writing to the parents / guardians. This function can be delegated by the Board to the Chairperson of the board and the Principal.

The parents / guardians should be notified of their right to appeal the expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

KEEPING RECORDS

A standardised record system will be used in the school to track an individual student's behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the student to deal with unacceptable behaviour will also be recorded, including contact with parents/guardians or referral to other agencies.

Positive responses by a student, and evidence of changed behaviour, will be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed.

Parents/ guardians will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record.

Records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003. The eight rules of data protection apply to personal records kept in school:

1. Obtain and process information fairly.
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes.
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes.
4. Keep it safe and secure.
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date.
6. Ensure it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes.
8. Give a copy of their personal data to an individual on request.

CLASS LEVEL

- Copies of incident forms / student's reflection on an incident will be copied and kept in the student's file.
- The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour.
- Problematic behaviour will have been discussed with parents / guardians before noting/recording on the end of year report.

PLAYGROUND

- Supervising teachers maintain written records of behaviour / incidents on standard behaviour / incident forms.

PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

The Education Welfare Act 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- E. The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 18 stipulates that parents / guardians must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

- BETNS policy in relation to explanation of student absences is that parents / guardians send in a note informing teachers of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. Verbal notification is insufficient.
- Written notes are signed and dated.
- BETNS sends a letter to parents / guardians if a child has missed 15 days.
- BETNS uses the standard forms to report on student absences over 20 days to the National Education Welfare Board.
- BETNS will inform the parents / guardians when they have notified the NEWB that their child has been absent for 20 days or more.

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Date of last Review	September 2019
Date of next review	September 2021

