

# **Catherine Mc Auley National School - Code of Behaviour**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

In devising the code, consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

The Board of Management of Catherine Mc Auley N.S has decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.

This policy was revised in 2019 prior to this review in 2020 and represents the collective thinking of the teaching staff parents, pupils and board of management of our school in order to promote positive behaviour amongst our students and to devise effective strategies to deal with challenges should they arise.

As part of this current review we are also introducing restorative practice – specifically the use of restorative questions to our whole school practice this year. These questions (for use after an incident when all parties are calm) are:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen now?

The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

We would like parents/guardians to read this document carefully so as to familiarise themselves with the school's policy in relation to good behaviour. We hope that, thus informed, they will:

A. Co-operate with the school with regard to the implementation of its policy on discipline.

B. Communicate regularly with the school about circumstances that might affect the behaviour of their children in school

### **1.1 Aims of Primary Education:**

1. To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual.
2. To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
3. To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning

### **1.2 Compliance with the Educational Welfare Act**

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
  - Respect self and others
  - Show kindness, fairness and willingness to help others
  - Act with courtesy and good manners
  - Show a readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and practice forgiveness.
  - Help to create a safe, positive environment
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 concerned;
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

### **1.3 Relationship to Characteristic Ethos of the School**

At Catherine Mc Auley N.S. the whole school community works together to provide a child-centred, stimulating and supportive positive environment, which is caring, inclusive, happy and secure, for children with learning difficulties arising from Dyslexia.

Children are enrolled on a temporary basis for a period of up to two or three years. The aim of the school is to help each child to improve his/her reading skills so that he/she will be better able to benefit from and cope with mainstream education.

We treat each child as an individual with his/her own unique set of abilities, talents and needs. The curriculum is adapted as far as possible to match the abilities and needs of each pupil. Particular attention is paid to the development of the children's self-confidence and self-esteem.

Children who attend Catherine Mc Auley N.S. are encouraged to develop holistically and reach their full potential in a structured environment in which each child feels safe and valued. Respect for self and others, self-discipline, growth, forgiveness, repairing relationship accountability and inclusion are an integral part of everyday life in our school and this Code of Behaviour is developed in accordance with these values.

The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school and the students. The children attend (on average) for two years only, therefore it is crucial that the whole school community works together to ensure that each child receives the best opportunity to progress without interference from disruptive behaviour. For this to happen parents and guardians must work closely with the school to implement the code of behaviour on a daily basis.

## **1.4 When the code of behaviour applies**

The school's Code of Behaviour applies during school hours, on school transport to and from school, at all fund-raising and social events organised by the school or Parent Association and on School Tours.

## **1.5 Aims and principles of this Code of Behaviour**

The code provides a framework through which positive behaviour is encouraged and negative behaviour is discouraged.

This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement;
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences among children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To foster an atmosphere of respect for self and others to foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment;
- To recognise and nurture positive behaviour in our children and thus enable them to learn to their full potential in a positive, productive and safe environment
- To ensure that this Code of Behaviour is widely understood through open and effective communication
- To ensure that the rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To assist parents and children in understanding the Code of Behaviour and to ensure their co-operation with its implementation

- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community;
- 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, parents and pupils

## **2.0 Roles and responsibilities**

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for maintaining order within the school premises. The SNA, under guidance from the teacher, will help to maintain discipline in the school. The staff will adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour within the school. Parents are encouraged to keep in regular contact with the school. Parents will be informed at an early stage if their child is having problems and support of parents is essential for the code to operate effectively.

### **2.1 Responsibility of the Patron / Board of Management**

- To ensure that policies and procedures are published in place in this area according to relevant legislation.
- To ratify the Code of Behaviour, the Anti-Bullying policy and related policies.
- To ensure that all members of the school community are involved in the development of the code.
- To ensure that the Principal and BOM are competent in dealing with the procedures of this code.
- To support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- To ensure confidentiality in all areas relating to this code.

### **2.2 Responsibility of the Principal**

Section 23 of the Education Act states that:

“ The principal of a recognised school shall, before registering a child as a student at that school in accordance with [section 20](#), provide the parents of such child with a copy of the code of behaviour in respect of the school and may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of

behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

The principal of a recognised school shall, on a request being made by a student registered at the school or a parent of such a student, provide the student or parent, as the case may be, with a copy of the code of behaviour in respect of the school concerned.”

- To promote a positive climate in the school.
- To ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- To arrange for review of the Code every two years.
- To distribute responsibility to the Deputy Principal and the School Management Team

### **2.3 Responsibility of the Staff**

- To support and implement the school Code of Behaviour in a fair and consistent manner.
- To create a safe working environment for each individual pupil, which helps to establish the link between behaviour and learning.
- To keep a record of positive/challenging behaviour that happens in the classroom and more serious issues in the Class Incident Book.
- To provide support for staff colleagues.
- To communicate with parents when necessary.

### **2. 4 Responsibility of the Pupil**

- To share ownership of the code by involvement in its development.
- To show respect for all members of the school community.
- To experience being part of a collective effort to make sure the school is a good place to teach and learn.
- To be inclusive in class and in the yard by learning the essential skills of listening negotiating and managing differences.



- To have their experience, insights and expectations recognised and used.

## **2.5 Responsibility of Parents/Guardians**

- To equip children with consistent messages of the link between learning and behaviour that is conducive to a happy school environment.
- To encourage the children to have a sense of respect for themselves and others.
- To share a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work.
- To ensure children attend regularly and punctually.
- To be familiar with the school Code of Behaviour and support implementation of same.
- To communicate and co-operate with the school in instances of challenging behaviour.

## **3.0 School Rules**

As stated in the NEWB guidelines,

We agree that rules work best when they are:

- Kept to a minimum
- Written in clear, simple language
- Stated positively, telling students what to do, as well as what not to do
- Based on a clear rationale that is explained, understood and agreed
- Developed through consultation with students, parents and staff
- Communicated and referred to regularly

### **3.1 Class rules**

We embrace the meaning and benefits of focused praise and encouragement and our class rules are designed to promote positive behaviour. These rules are displayed in the classroom and are applied in a fair and consistent manner. Class rules should be age appropriate and devised with regard to health, safety, welfare

and learning. Teachers may use different strategies to promote positive behaviour in the classroom. Where difficulties arise parents will be consulted at an early stage

- Children will co-operate with instructions given by teacher /SNA the first time the request is made
- Children will participate actively in learning tasks
- Children will behave safely and respect all property and school materials
- Children will respect the rights of others to learn in a secure and safe environment
- Children will respect their classmates and members of the school community at all times

### **3.2 Yard Rules**

Children will go out to the yard in designated class 'bubbles'. Yard rules are clear and are communicated to the children at assemblies and in individual classrooms regularly. They are designed to create a safe and secure play area, bearing in mind the limited space available to the students. Pupils are encouraged to play co-operatively and with respect to rights of all students on the yard. A rotating system of access to basketball and football is in place, as well as skipping and other seasonal activities. Teachers support students by teaching social skills in the social environment and importance of friendships in accordance with the SPHE curriculum.

- Always play safely and kindly –no physical contact
- Walk safely and calmly to and from yard
- Children are permitted to run on the yard
- Keep inside designated boundaries
- Ask permission to leave the yard (e.g. to use toilet)
- Follow teacher/SNA instructions first time
- Freeze on bell, line up quietly when class called at the wall
- The yard is a bully free zone in line with our anti-bullying policy

### **3.3 Rewards and Acknowledgement of Good Behaviour**

Catherine Mc Auley NS places a greater emphasis on affirming positive behaviour than on sanctions. We believe that children will take greater responsibility for their behaviour when:

- They are given responsibility in the school eg class jobs
- They are involved in devising the Code of Behaviour
- They see the Code of Behaviour being implemented consistently and fairly
- The expectations are clear, consistent and widely understood
- There are good relationships between staff, parents and pupils
- There are clear boundaries for pupils
- There are good school and classroom routines
- Good behaviour is valued and recognised

### **3.4 In-Class Rewards**

In-class rewards will be decided by the class teacher

The following are regarded as appropriate examples of rewards within the class

- A quiet word or gesture of approval
- A comment in a child's diary or copy
- A visit to another member of staff or Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class • A star, sticker or system of merit marks
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents, (Written or verbal)
- Class treat (movie or park trip for example Homework passes (allowing a child to skip homework some evening of their choice)
- Star Awards the teachers present three awards at assembly every two weeks explaining why the child has won the award. These awards focus on personal achievement in learning or behaviour and are achievable by all children. A small prize is awarded along with a Star Award certificate.
- Students who receive no written warnings on the yard in a calendar month are awarded a homework voucher from the principal.

- Twice termly a whole school outing is provided for those students with one or less written warning on the yard in the half term period.

#### **4.0 Children with Additional Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour Policy. However, the school recognises that children may have additional needs that may require assistance in understanding certain rules. In accordance with Education of Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act) a specialised behaviour plans may be put in place by the by teacher , principal or a School-based team. The School Based Team may also work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

#### **5.0 Collective and targeted measures to minimise the risk of the spread of COVID-19**

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to specifically outline behavioural expectations so that our collective efforts have maximum impact in keeping everyone in the school community safe and well.

##### **5.1 Specific behaviour expectations**

Our school requires every member of the school community to observe and respect the principles of social distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette and make every effort to minimise risk to oneself and others. This requires us to modify some of our behaviours which include:

- Amended expectations about breaks or play/lunch times, including where students may/may not congregate.

- Clear rules about coughing or spitting at/towards any other person – specifically that this is not permitted
- Clear rules for students at home about conduct in relation to remote education
- Identify any reasonable adjustments that need to be made for students with more challenging behaviour

## **5.2 School routines and procedures**

All members of the school community will be mindful of the following

- Following any altered routines for arrival or departure (e.g. wear a mask on the school bus – and the necessary mask etiquette)
- Following instruction on who students can socialise with at school (e.g. stay in bubbles)
- Moving around the school as per specific instructions (following arrows to maintain distancing, remaining quiet while other classes are working etc.)
- Rules about not sharing any objects or equipment
- Use of toilets

## **5.3 Hygiene and health expectations**

- Following school instruction on handwashing and sanitisation
- Expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal (catch it, bin it, kill it) and avoid touching mouth nose and eyes with hands
- Tell an adult if you are feeling unwell

## **5.4 Wellbeing and social/emotional learning**

Our school will provide a safe and pleasant environment and will actively promote their wellbeing. This will include additional time devoted to in-class discussions on wellbeing and responding (in a sensitive way) to any issues raised.

## **5.5 Unsafe behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic**

Incidents where students:

- Fail to comply with requests from staff to practice social distancing
- Inappropriate fake coughing/sneezing that is offensive to other children/adults
- Spitting or coughing at students or adults
- Spreading rumours or stories that students or adults have COVID-19

**In line with this policy – any of these incidents will be dealt with as a ‘serious misbehaviour’ as outlined in the next section.**

## **6.0 Procedures and sanctions**

All members of staff have a shared responsibility in operating the Code of Behaviour. Visiting staff, student teachers, etc., are expected to implement the code. In addition, all staff and visiting staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Protection Policy. Copies of all school policies are in each classroom and in the office.

### **Sanctions:**

In accordance with the National Welfare Education Board (NEWB) P. 52 we understand that:

The objective of a sanction is to help the student to learn. The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others

- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

Appropriate sanctions will be part of a plan to help the student to change or avoid repeating unacceptable behaviour. It will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the unacceptable behaviour and will be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the student. Sanctions should be sensitive to the particular circumstances of vulnerable individuals. The decision to apply a sanction and the manner of using sanctions should always be guided by professional judgement and discretion, and where possible curricular areas will not be interrupted. A sanction should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

In particular, a sanction should:

- defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way
- be timely.

A student should be able to relate the sanction to the behaviour that prompts the offence. After a child has been reprimanded for unacceptable behaviour every effort will be made to repair and rebuild relationships. It is important that children are given

a dignified re-entry, allowed to move on without grudges being held and given the opportunity to start each day afresh.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Procedure for dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

Four Stage Procedure:

1. Teacher - Child
2. Teacher - Child - Principal
3. Teacher - Parents/Guardians - Principal - Child (depending on age)
4. Teacher - Parents/Guardians - Principal - Board of Management.

#### **Stage 1: Teacher – Child**

- Correcting the child, indicating that the behaviour is unacceptable, referring to the Rules.

The following are examples of sanctions that can be used by the teacher; they are dependent on child's age, level of understanding, severity and frequency of the poor behaviour and are not exhaustive.

1. Child may be moved to another seat or transferred to another class within their designated bubble – not outside the classroom. A pupil may work in another classroom away from the usual group for a cooling off period.
2. Child may be asked to make up work 'avoided' at break or lunch time, in their own classroom.
3. Be withdrawn from participating in practical work for a period of time as appropriate to safeguard the welfare of the majority of the pupils.
4. Be removed from their classroom to the Principal's office for a period of time.

Remove this one?

Teachers will take a note of persistent misbehaviour.



### **Stage 2: Teacher - Child - Principal**

- Serious or unresolved incidents will be referred to the Principal.
1. Be warned by the Principal, to stop offending.
  2. Have privileges withdrawn eg: exclusion from the school activities at break and /or lunch time
  3. Sanctions used in Stage 1 will be reinforced.

The Principal will make a note of difficulties at stage 2: on the Aladdin system.

### **Stage 3: Teacher - Parent/Guardians - Principal – (Child)**

- If the unacceptable behaviour continues, Principal and class teacher will meet with parents / guardians and follow the procedure below.
1. Have their parents/guardians informed (by phone call or letter). Parents will be called in to the school.
  2. Be placed on a daily or weekly report, to be signed by both parent and teacher and checked regularly by the Principal.
  3. Have a contract agreed which includes the staged accrual of privileges. The contract should be written in such a way that it focused on specific behavioural problems and offers accrued benefits for achieving the stated goals- in this way a balance can be seen to be kept between sanctions and rewards. See Appendix 4 for sample behaviour contracts.
  4. Be suspended from school (if they do not stop offending) for a minor fixed period (one or two days).
  5. Parents/guardians must agree to try to help the child to overcome the unacceptable behaviour.
  6. Outside agencies may be called in at this point to help, e.g. Social Workers, School Psychologist etc.

### **Stage 4. Teacher - Parents/Guardians - Principal - Board of Management**

In the very rare event that a child is continuously disruptive it may be more appropriate to remove the child temporarily from the school – i.e. suspension. Records of incidents of unacceptable behaviour are maintained by the school.

### **6.1 Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross.**

Everyday instances of minor misbehaviour are dealt with by the class teacher or a member of staff. In cases of serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be notified at an early stage and may be invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Please note that these lists are non-exhaustive:

#### Minor Misbehaviour

- Running in the school building
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Being disruptive in class
- Not doing homework
- Minor breaches of General, Class and Playground Rules
- Minor breaches of the acceptable use policy regarding the misuse of technology and internet (if this behaviour contravenes the Cyber Bullying or Acceptable Use Policies it shall be referred to the appropriate Policy)
- Minor damage to property
- Littering around the school

#### Serious Misbehaviour

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour
- Telling lies
- Rudeness or disrespect in addressing a staff member or adult
- Deliberate, continual disobedience
- Threats or physical hurt to another person which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour

- Deliberate damage to property
- Forging a parent's signature
- Minor theft
- Use of unacceptable language
- Name calling
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures
- Serious breaches of general, class and yard rules
- Serious breaches of the acceptable use policy regarding the misuse of technology and internet (if this behaviour contravenes the Cyber Bullying or Acceptable Use Policies it shall be referred to the appropriate Policy)
- Persistent minor misbehaviour will be classified as Serious Misbehaviour
- Use of mobile phones or electronic equipment with recording capabilities without staff permission
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous
- Any of the behaviours outlined in section 5.5 **Unsafe behaviour during COVID-19 pandemic**

#### Gross Misbehaviour

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour including physical assault or verbal abuse
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Physical or verbal aggression/physically harming another child or staff member
- Serious/harmful name calling or put downs', swearing, racist comments
- Blatant mistreatment of school property or another individual's property
- Serious theft
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Gross breaches of the acceptable use policy regarding the misuse of technology and internet (if this behaviour contravenes the Cyber Bullying or Acceptable Use Policies it shall be referred to the appropriate Policy)
- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school

• Very serious breaches of general, class and playground rules • Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.

## **6.2 Bullying**

Bullying is repeated deliberate aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying. All reports of bullying in school will be investigated and dealt with immediately and the unacceptable behaviour dealt with promptly and discreetly. The parents/guardians of any child involved in a serious incident will be informed. Bullying or any form of intimidation in school is forbidden. See also the school Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **6.3 Suspension and Expulsion**

Steps to be followed in accordance with rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools and with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 when suspension or expulsion are considered by a Board of Management.

- Chairperson of Board of Management informed.
- Parents will be requested in writing or by personal contract to attend school to meet the Chairperson and/or the Principal.
- If parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, 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 parents. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days.
- The Board of Management can authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of ten school days to allow for consultation with the pupil or pupil's parents/guardians.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorise a further period of exclusion in order to allow for 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.
- Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that a pupil should be expelled the Board will seek permission to do so from the Patron and will also inform the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) of its decision and reasons in writing.
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the NEWB has received notification in writing.
- Where a school has expelled a pupil and all appeal processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the Student Absence Report Form

### **7.0 Complaints Procedure**

Parents are asked to use the Complaints Procedure if they are in disagreement with decisions made by the school in regard to the Behaviour Policy. A copy of the Complaints Procedure Policy is in Appendix 2 or available through the INTO/Management Complaints Procedure web link:

**<https://www.into.ie/ROI/InfoforTeachers/ParentTeacherRelations/INTOManagementComplaintsProcedure/>**

### **Implementation**

All teachers are responsible for the implementation of this plan. It will be monitored and discussed by the behaviour committee in collaboration with staff members. When necessary these discussions will take place at staff meetings and/or planning days.

### **8.0 Implementation of this policy**

This policy will be implemented immediately. Timeframe for review: During 2021/22 school year.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This code of behaviour was distributed to all staff and was ratified by the Board of Management on:

Date: 5/10/2020

Signed: *Elaine Egan (Chairperson)*

## **Appendix 1**

### **Certificate of Co-Operation with Catherine McCauley N.S.**

#### **Behaviour Policy**

The safety and wellbeing of all children attending our school is of the utmost importance to us. With this in mind, a Behaviour Policy that represents the collective thinking of our school community has been devised. We request that parents read the policy carefully with their child/children and discuss the contents.

Please sign the following undertaking and return this form to the school.

I confirm that I/we have received this document and commit to sharing this with my child \_\_\_\_\_, we agree to uphold this policy.

Signed by Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please keep the policy document safely at home for future reference.

## **Appendix 2 INTO/Management complaints procedure**

The INTO and Primary School Management reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the board to be:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Skills;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- Complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints, not in the above categories, may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

### **Stage 1**

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher s/he should approach the principal with a view to resolving it.
3. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the chairperson of the board of management with a view to resolving it.

### **Stage 2**

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.



2. The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 3**

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the board to be required:
  - a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
  - b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 4**

1. If the complaint is still not resolved the chairperson should make a formal report to the board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).
2. If the board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the board meeting.
3. If the board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
  - a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  - b) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
  - c) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response to the complaint;
  - c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
  - d) the board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and
  - e) the meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

## **Stage 5**

1. When the board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the board.
2. The decision of the board shall be final.
3. The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.
4. Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

**Note:** The vast majority of complaints are resolved locally and informally. However, in certain circumstances, for example, where a complaint is considered to be serious in nature, or where the teacher is required to submit a written response to his/her board of management, the teacher should contact his/her INTO District Representative or INTO Head Office for advice and assistance.

In advising a teacher, the INTO will be anxious to ensure that there is due process and fair procedures applied, which generally include:

- that the teacher is fully appraised of all matters being considered by the board of management, including being provided with copies of all relevant documentation;
- the right to respond and adequate time to prepare a response;
- Entitlement to be represented by the INTO, if necessary.

Where a teacher contacts the INTO in relation to a complaint(s) made against him/her, the officials involved will generally meet with the teacher and require him/her to provide detailed written information and documentation on the matter. The officials will assess the case and decide if additional specific legal advice or a legal consultation is required. Specific legal advice is obtained for members in accordance with the Rules of the INTO and the conditions prescribed by the CEC.

**Updated July 2014**

### Appendix 3

<b>Good Manners Poster</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to others when they are speaking to you.</li><li>• Raise your hand when you wish to say something.</li><li>• Say 'hello', smile or wave when you meet someone you know.</li><li>• Hold the door open for a teacher or another pupil.</li><li>• Work together to get the job done.</li><li>• Take turns.</li><li>• Knock and wait before entering the office or classroom.</li><li>• Share with others.</li><li>• Clean up after yourself.</li><li>• Wash your hands after using the toilet.</li><li>• Cover your mouth when you sneeze using a tissue or your arm.</li><li>• Have good table manners.</li></ul>

<b>The Language of Good Manners</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please</li><li>• Thank You</li><li>• No Thanks</li><li>• Pardon</li><li>• Excuse Me</li><li>• You're Welcome</li><li>• May I</li><li>• Sorry</li></ul>

**References:**

Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 Section 23(1 -5), 24 (1-5)

Education Act, 1998 Section 15 (2(d))

Circular 20/90 (Department of Education, [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie))

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (National Education Welfare Board) 2008

INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers

INTO (2005) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools

Jenny Mosley (1996) Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom: Your Essential guide to Enhancing Self-esteem, Self-discipline and Positive Relationships