

# **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

**2013**

# CODE OF BEHAVIOUR OF SCOIL DARA

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## 1 SCOIL DARA'S MISSION STATEMENT

Scoil Dara promotes the development of a community of faith inspired by Gospel values.

The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world.

The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures.

While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school.

We engage with alternative approaches to education especially for those who are most disadvantaged.

The school promotes a spirit of service and care.

The values that inform the policy are those of: the gospel, increasing the independence of the learner, the dignity of the human person, the primary of the learner's needs, care for those disadvantaged, the spirit of service and care.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

Scoil Dara's Code of Behaviour is underpinned by:

- 1) Our obligations under the Irish Constitution and current legislation, including the Education Welfare Act 2000 (and NEWB guidelines)
- 2) Our Mission Statement and School Ethos
- 3) The CEIST Charter

## 3. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all of the students of Scoil Dara enrolled under DES second level schools' regulations and relates to all

school activities both during and outside of normal school hours and anywhere students are clearly identified as students of Scoil Dara.

#### **4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

- To clarify what is expected in terms of student behaviour.
- To create a positive environment conducive to learning and teaching.
- To promote responsible behaviour and good citizenship.
- To outline rewards for achievement and good behaviour.
- To make parents and students aware of procedures for dealing with misconduct and infringement of school rules.
- To encourage and support students in aiming for the highest ideals.
- To set out procedures for suspension and expulsion and how same may be removed
- To specify appeals procedures
- To specify how parents will explain absences from school

#### **5. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE CODE**

- a) *Scoil Dara recognises the rights of each student and balances these with the common good and rights of other students to promote:*
  - Respect
  - An atmosphere of learning
  - Concern for the environment
  - Health and Safety
  - Positive behaviour
- b) The school will have regard to a student's particular circumstances and conditions which may affect a student's behaviour.
- c) The principles of natural justice will always apply.
- d) High expectations of all students - in all aspects of school life.
- e) Parents are encouraged to participate actively in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutually beneficial links between school and home.
- f) All staff of the school have the right to carry out their work unhindered, and in a positive atmosphere.

- g) All students have the right to learn and receive tuition unhindered and in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and teaching.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR:**

### **Parents:**

In Scoil Dara parents are valued partners in education.

On enrolling their child, it will be a condition of enrolment that parents sign acceptance and understanding of the Code of Behaviour and any revision / amendment approved by the Board of Management.

Prior to signing acceptance of the Code of Behaviour each parent will be asked to confirm that s/he understands the Code and ,if required , will be given assistance to understand.

Parents shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child/children comply with the Code of Behaviour.

Parents have the responsibility to actively support the school staff in the fair implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

Parents have the responsibility, by law, to send a written explanation for absence to the school on the school's prescribed form for this purpose.

### **Students:**

On enrolment each student is required to accept and understanding of the Code of Behaviour. Prior to signing acceptance of the Code of Behaviour each student will be asked to confirm that s/he understand the Code and, if required, will be given assistance to understand.

This Code of Behaviour is one of the support systems in place in Scoil Dara, to enable students to get the most from their time at school and to promote responsible behaviour and good citizenship.

Students are expected to be kind, courteous, trustworthy and respectful to each other, to all members of the school community and to all with whom they come into contact.

Students have the responsibility to make a positive contribution to the life of the school in terms of work, behaviour and relationships.

Behaviour that is dangerous or disruptive will not be accepted and will be dealt with by way of disciplinary sanction.

### **School Staff:**

#### **(a ) Teachers**

Teachers are responsible in the first instance for discipline in the classroom and they share responsibility outside of the classroom. In relation to their responsibility for discipline in the classroom, teachers should endeavour to:

- Have a positive regard for all students.
- Expect honest effort and high standards in terms of work and behaviour.
- Employ best practice methods of teaching.
- Seek to create an attractive classroom environment.
- Take account of students' social, environmental and cultural circumstances

All teachers have the right to teach and carry out their professional duties unhindered and in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and teaching.

#### **(b ) Principal:**

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal, subject to the authority of the Board of Management.

The Principal will provide guidance, leadership and support to staff, students and parents in the application of the Code of Behaviour and in disciplinary matters in general.

The Principal will ensure that the Code of Behaviour is administered in a fair and consistent manner.

The Principal will encourage a sense of collective responsibility among staff and a sense of commitment to the school among staff, students and parents.

The Principal may at his/her discretion delegate responsibility for discipline.

#### **(c )Senior Management Team:**

Subject to the direction of the Principal, the Deputy Principal and Year Heads will play key roles in the maintenance of good discipline in the school.

#### **Board of Management:**

The Board of Management will ensure that:

- The statutory obligations of the school are adhered to

- A review of the Code is carried out regularly
- School management and teachers are fully supported and resourced in implementing the Code of Behaviour.

## **7. REGULATIONS:**

**Any breaches of state law, within the school grounds, or while in school uniform or while on any out of school activity organized by the school will be regarded as a breach of school rules.**

### **Access to school premises and grounds:**

During term time the school is open from 8.00a.m. - 4.00p.m. Students should leave the school premises at the end of the school day, with the exception of those students engaged in activities authorized by the school.

During weekends and holidays access to the school grounds and premises is by arrangement with the school Principal.

### **Accident reporting:**

Any accident that occurs in the school or on a school outing or trip must be reported by the student (endorsed by the student's parent/guardian) in full and in writing to the student's Year Head.

### **Aggressive/Violent Behaviour**

Aggressive/violent behaviour of any kind is a very serious offence and may merit the ultimate sanction available to the Board of Management of permanent exclusion from the school.

### **Attendance and Punctuality:**

- Students are expected to attend school consistently and be on time for all classes.
- Students are expected to stay on the school grounds until the end of the school day.
- Students must bring a note from parents/guardians on the day following their absence to cover absences from school. The note should state a reason for the absence. The note must be furnished as required, immediately following the absence. Failure to do so will incur a sanction.
- During the day, all absence from class or school grounds must be sanctioned by the teacher with authority to grant such approval. Absence from class or school

grounds without appropriate permission will incur sanctions.

- Punctuality to school and class is an important practice and essential for good order in the school. Failure to be punctual may result in disciplinary action.

### **Behaviour Coming To And Going From School:**

Students are expected to behave in a responsible and polite manner.

All students should, by their actions, take care always to uphold the good reputation of the school.

The Code of Behaviour applies to all students coming to and going from school.

Scoil Dara appreciates and values all its neighbours and the wider community. We encourage all our students to share this value. Actions that negatively impact on our neighbours or on the school will be the subject of disciplinary action.

### **Behaviour in the Classroom:**

All students are expected to be well behaved in class to allow the teaching of the class to proceed without interference or disruption. Failure to comply will lead to sanctions being imposed.

### **Behaviour outside the Classroom, at Lunchtime, at Break:**

Responsible, polite safe behaviour is expected from students at all times. Teachers and supervisors have the right and duty to intervene appropriately when necessary to implement the Code of Behaviour.

### **Bullying:**

On enrolment each student will be required to sign acceptance and understanding of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Prior to signing acceptance of the Policy each student will be asked to confirm that s/he understand the Policy and, if required, will be given assistance to understand.

All students are expected to comply with the school's anti-bullying policy.

All students have the right to remain free from bullying, racism, sexism, harassment and violence. Any incidence of such behaviour

will be taken very seriously and will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

**Eating and Drinking:**

Consumption of food and drinks is allowed in designated areas of the school only and in accordance with the school's healthy eating guidelines.

**Entry to and Exit from School:**

Students are requested to ensure that they behave in a manner that does not endanger their own safety or that of others, particularly when entering or exiting the school grounds. Due regard should be paid to all traffic.

**Environment:**

As a school community we owe a special duty of care to our environment. Food and products no longer required should be disposed of properly. We aim to encourage a positive, proactive approach to the management of the school environment by the whole school community through practices such as recycling and litter prevention. Accordingly, **chewing gum and the causing of litter** are not allowed in school grounds at **any** time and will be the subject of sanctions.

**Examination Regulations:**

Students are expected to comply with the State and school examination regulations.

**Homework:**

All homework set by the teachers should be completed to an acceptable standard. Homework includes learning and written assignments, revision of material covered in class and project work. Failure to comply will lead to sanctions being imposed.

**Lockers:**

Students are expected to comply fully with current locker regulations which are displayed outside the staffroom.

**Offensive Weapons and Practices:**

Possession of potentially dangerous/offensive weapons, e.g. knives, pellet guns, air pistols, or mock imitations of the foregoing etc is strictly forbidden.

Possession of flammable substances e.g. lighter fuel, fireworks, and bangers is also strictly forbidden and these may not be brought on to the school grounds or into the vicinity of the school grounds.

Students should not engage in activities likely to injure or threaten others e.g. throwing stones or other objects.

**Outings & Tours:**

This Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and school tours.

Before a student is accepted for a school tour, his/her previous behaviour may be taken into account.

Parental consent is required for all outings and tours.

**Parking regulations:**

Parking facilities are reserved for school staff and visitors.

Students are not permitted to park cars or motor cycles in the school grounds. All students must comply with the schools' current parking regulations

**Personal Electronic Equipment and Mobile Phones:**

All students must comply with the school's current Personal Electronic Equipment Code which is displayed outside the staffroom.

Students using electronic devices in or out of school in a manner that violates the rights of another person associated with the school or of the school (*such as: sending nuisance or offensive communications or the taking of unauthorized images or the posting on the internet of images or disparaging material about a student, member of staff or the school*) will be in direct breach of the school's Code of Behaviour

**Personal and Public Property:**

Every student is expected to respect his/her own property, the personal property of others and the property of the school.

Interference with, vandalism, (including graffiti) or theft of property will not be tolerated and all losses must be made good to the owner.

Interference with the property and rights of our neighbours will not be tolerated.

**Representing the School:**

Representing the school e.g. at a sporting activity is a privilege and an honour, not an automatic right. A student's previous behaviour may be taken into account when granting permission to the student to represent the school.

**Schoolbooks, Equipment and Materials:**

Students must have textbooks, journals and all material required for each class. Failure to comply will lead to sanctions being imposed.

**Smoking:**

Smoking on the school premises and grounds is prohibited by Government statute and is the subject of "zero tolerance".

Scoil Dara parents are expected to assume full responsibility for their child's compliance with this regulation.

**Student Access to the Internet:**

Student access to and use of the Internet is bound by the school's current Internet and acceptable use policy. Students only have access to student designated computers currently located in the computer rooms and library. Students have no access to classroom computers. All students are required to familiarize themselves with this policy and adhere strictly to it.

Failure to comply will result in sanctions being imposed.

**Substance Abuse:**

All students are required to comply with the school's Substance Abuse policy. Students will be briefed on this policy each year at an assembly.

The possession, use or consumption of alcohol or prohibited substances is forbidden at all times.

**Uniform:**

The uniform is a visual symbol of the school.

All students are expected to comply fully with the school's current uniform code.

Daily admission to school will be dependent on compliance with the school uniform and dress codes.

## 8. SUPPORT STRUCTURES

*Scoil Dara aims to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour and to reward achievement and good behaviour through the:*

- Pastoral Care System
- Guidance and Counselling Service
- School's Systems and Practices of Commendation

## 9. SANCTIONS

**The objective of a sanction is to help the student to learn**

**FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ANY CODES OR REGULATIONS IN FORCE IN THE SCHOOL MAY LEAD TO SANCTIONS BEING IMPOSED**

### **The Purpose of Sanctions**

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

- helping students to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognize 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.

Any student who violates the behaviour code will be held responsible for the violation.

The school will seek to have the student understand the effect this violation has on the whole school community. In addition he/she may be asked to make good all damage to property or loss suffered by another party as a result of the violation of the code.

In all cases of failure to comply with the code, the school has the right to conduct a thorough investigation and students and parents will be required to cooperate fully.

The school will develop a policy / set of guidelines for the information of parents and students on how investigations will be conducted.

The school may impose a sanction and / or suggest supportive interventions.

Sanctions may include:

- A reprimand - verbal or written
- A warning - written; 3 warnings = detention
- Logging; 3 adverse entries under the log book system will result in a detention
- Extra work
- Cleaning classroom or other area of the school
- Break or lunchtime detention
- Detention after school (with 48-hour notification). Failure to attend detention may lead to a 1-day suspension.
- On report
- Internal suspension, may be imposed where a student prevents a class from being taught due to disruptive behaviour. Internal suspension for a specified period may be imposed by the Principal/Deputy Principal. (Internal suspension is where a student is removed for a stated period from his / scheduled class(es) and assigned for supervision purposes to another classroom).
- Community service
- Fines, where applicable

- Confiscation of property limited to a period not exceeding ten school days for first offence.
- Full monetary restitution for damage caused
- Suspension
- Expulsion

If the negative behaviour continues the student concerned will be required to meet with his/her Year Head and or Principal/Deputy Principal. Such a meeting may also involve parents/guardians of the student.

A range of supportive interventions may be considered to bring about an improvement. Interventions may include referral to the school's pastoral care personnel, the offer of learning support or counselling or referral to outside agencies.

In the case of serious violation of the Code of Behaviour the student may be referred directly to the Principal who may impose suspension.

Internal suspension for a specified period may be imposed by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

### **Suspension**

Suspensions can provide a respite for staff and the student, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour.

1. The Board of Management has delegated the power to suspend a student, to the Principal. The school has the right, through the Principal, to suspend a student for serious misconduct, subject to statute legislation and the Board of Management.
2. All suspensions will be notified by the Principal to the Board of Management
3. The National Education Welfare Board will be informed of any suspension of 5 days or more and of any expulsion. The NEWB will also be informed if any suspension gives rise to a situation where a student's total absences for the year exceed 20 days. Appeals may be made to the DES in the case of an expulsion or where the cumulative total number of days on suspension for a student exceeds 20 in any one year.

4. The National Educational Welfare Board's guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour will be consulted in all cases where severe sanctions, in particular suspension and expulsion, are being considered.

#### **Procedures to be followed in the event of a Suspension**

1. The matter will be very serious: either a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious single incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the principal or deputy or a person with delegated responsibility, other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present his/her side of the story. The student will be asked to give an account in writing.
4. The parent will be consulted prior to the imposition of a suspension. Where a suspension is being considered a student may be required to stay at home until his/her parents have complied with the request to attend at the school.
5. Parents will normally be advised in writing of a decision to suspend. The letter will include the following :
  - Notification of the decision & reason(s) for same
  - The effective date and duration of the suspension
  - A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the duration of the suspension.
  - Expectations of a student while on suspension.
  - If the NEWB has been informed, this should be stated.
  - Rights of appeal (if any) e.g. Section 29 Appeal if applicable.
  - If the suspension is an interim action prior to consideration of expulsion, this is to be clearly stated.
6. The Principal may suspend a student for up to three days. All suspensions will be reported to the Board of Management at their next ordinary meeting. There is no appeal to the Board of Management or the DES, against a suspension of three days or less.
7. Suspensions for a period longer than three days will normally be considered by the Board of Management for a serious breach of discipline, except in the case of a very disruptive pupil who has already been suspended. In this case the Board may delegate authority to suspend such a pupil for up to one week to the principal. In the case of a very serious breach of the Code, the Principal will be entitled in consultation with the Chairperson of the

BOM to suspend a student for a longer period than three days. Prior to a decision being made to suspend a pupil, parents will be given an opportunity to make their case to the Board or the Principal as applicable.

8. Where the Board of Management suspends a student and the cumulative number of days' suspension for that student exceeds 20 in any one school year, parents will be informed of their right to appeal the decision to the DES.
9. Where a proposal to suspend is before the Board of Management and a student is involved in a further serious disciplinary incident that student may be required to stay at home or be suspended for a period up to three days or until the matter is decided upon by the Board of Management, whichever is the earlier. In that event the Board will take the further incident into account in reaching its decision.

10. **Grounds for removing a suspension:**

Following a suspension, the parents/guardians (or student over 18 years) may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter further and to make further representations. Where the school is satisfied that new circumstances have come to light that have a bearing on the matter, the decision to suspend may be reviewed (by those who made the decision) and then an alternative sanction imposed if deemed appropriate.

- 11 The Board of Management will have a system for a regular review by the Board of the use of suspension in the school.

## **EXPULSION**

### **Procedures to be followed in the event that expulsion is being considered.**

1. The matter will be very serious; with a pattern of persistent misconduct or a serious once-off incident.
2. The issue will be fully investigated by the Principal or deputy or a person with delegated responsibility other than the offended party. Witnesses to the event(s) may be interviewed. A written record of the investigation will be kept.
3. The student against whom the complaint is made will be given an opportunity to present their side of the story. The student will be asked to give an account in writing.

4. The parent will be given an opportunity to present their case to the Board of Management.
5. Where a serious offence has occurred that in the Principal's view, may lead to an expulsion, a student may be required to stay at home until the matter is considered by the Board of Management.
6. The matter may be considered at the next Board of Management meeting or an emergency meeting of the Board of Management, with a single item agenda may be called, as soon as practicable and normally within 6 school days, to determine the issue. A minimum of three days notice will normally be given to parents in such a case.
7. At the start of the meeting the Chairperson shall enquire whether any Board member has a conflict of interest, in respect of the matter being considered by the Board. Where the board is satisfied that a conflict of interest exists, the member(s) involved shall withdraw from the meeting at the same time as the parents (or guardians), student (if over 18 and representing himself or herself) and the principal.
8. Written documentation will be supplied to parents and Board Members with the notice of the Board meeting. Such documentation will include.
  - The details of the allegation against the student.
  - A copy of the case to be presented against the student at the Board hearing.
  - A copy of any supporting documentation that may be used by the school in support of its case.
  - A clear statement that expulsion is being considered as a sanction in this instance.
  - An invitation to make a written submission and/or to be present and heard at the hearing.
  - Expectations of the student (while on suspension pending a hearing)
  - A statement that the NEWB has been informed, this should be stated.
  - Rights of appeal e.g. Section 29 Appeal.
9. Parents may be accompanied at the board hearing but, as it is a lay forum, legal representation is not the normal practice.
10. The principal will present the case against the student and will be available to answer questions from parents and Board members.
11. The parents/guardians (or student over 18) will present their case and will be available to answer questions from parents and Board Members

12. Once the principal and the parents have made their presentations they will withdraw from the meeting.
13. Should the Board require the professional advice of the Principal, he/she may be invited to return to the meeting briefly for that purpose. While the Principal is present, there will be no discussion on the merits of the particular case being considered.
14. When considering an expulsion or a long-term suspension the Board will ensure that the following factors are given due consideration.
  - The seriousness of the misbehaviour
  - The likelihood of a recurrence
  - The impact the misbehaviour is having on the learning of others
  - The safety of students and teachers in the school
  - The degree to which the behaviour was in violation of written school rule(s) and the relative importance of the rule(s)
  - Whether the incident was perpetrated by the individual on his/her own or whether as part of a group; if as part of a group, the extent to which the individual is responsible for the misbehaviour.
  - The extent to which parental, peer or other pressures may have contributed to the misbehaviour.
  - The frequency of misbehaviour from the student
  - The cumulative discipline record of the student
  - What previous interventions and sanctions have been tried and the level of success of such interventions and sanctions
  - The responses of the student and his/her parents or guardians to any previous misbehaviour
  - The academic, attendance and extra-curricular record of the student
  - The age of the student
  - Whether the student is school leaving age
  - Whether the student is due to sit for any state examinations in the near future.
15. The Board will reach its decision and will record the reasons for deciding as it does.
16. Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that a student should be expelled from Scoil Dara it shall, before expelling the

student, notify the Educational Welfare Officer, in writing of its opinion and the reasons therefore.

17. The Board shall not give effect to its decision to expel until 20 days have passed since receipt of the notification by the Education Welfare Officer

18. Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that a student should be expelled,

the parents/guardian (and/or a student over 18) the student will be informed by letter delivered

by registered post. The letter will include the following:

- Notice of the opinion that the student should be expelled and the effective date of the expulsion (this shall not be before the passing of 20 days following the receipt by an Educational Welfare Officer of the notification to expel)
- The reason(s) for the expulsion
- Their right to appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act and information about the appeal process including the titles, phone number(s) and addresses of the relevant authorities and that the student will remain out of the school until the outcome of an Appeal (if any) is known.
- A statement that the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) has been informed
- A clear statement that the student is under the care of the parents/guardians for the period of 20 days required by the Education Welfare Officer of the NEWB to examine alternative provision for the student
- Expectations of the student while under the care of his/her parents/guardians.

19. Following the expiry of the 20 days, the parents/guardian, and in a case of a student over 18 the student, will be informed by letter delivered by registered post that the expulsion is confirmed with effect from the date specified in the letter.

20. The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular

intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is

used appropriately.

## **10. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE**

- All members of the school's teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- The full co-operation of parents/guardians is expected in the event of being contacted by the school on a disciplinary matter.
- Parents /guardians must encourage their son/daughter to uphold the Code of Behaviour.
- Each student is expected to do his/her best to uphold the Code of Behaviour.
- The Board of Management will monitor aspects of the implementation of and compliance with the Code of Behaviour on an annual basis.

## **11 SUCCESS CRITERIA**

The views of staff, students and parents will be sought in all reviews of the success of implementation and compliance.

The criteria used will relate to the aspect of the Code chosen for evaluation.

Each evaluation will be published within the school and will provide details of the success criteria used.

## **12 REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

Few things in life remain static and not amenable to improvement following a review and evaluation.

Significant learning and insight can result from reflection, review and evaluation of the Code of Discipline

Review and evaluation of the Code of Discipline can result in a better Code and better understanding of the Code for all members of the school community.

- An evaluation report on the implementation of the Code of Behaviour will be presented annually to the Board of Management.

- The Code will be reviewed at least every three years. More frequent reviews may take place as required.
- The implementation of the Code of Behaviour will be included on the agenda of staff meetings at least once a year.

This Code of Behaviour was adopted by the Board of Management in January 2013.

This Code will be reviewed in January 2015

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr Padraig Byrne  
Chairperson (Board of Management)